

DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts



TIME AND TOD By Muriel Roy Bolton

A Three Act Comedy with plenty of romp, based on the famous series of humorous stories that appeared in American magazine.

4 males, 5 females. Interior. Modern Costumes.

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Tod (10 years old) has a mother, grandfather, and two sisters. Kitty is much prettier, and is hounded by boys. Tod wants Kitty's room because it has a secret trap door in the closet that leads to the roof. Tod gets sick deliberately to arrange for a new and handsome doctor to call. Kitty and the doctor are infatuated immediately, and Tod's plans to get rid of Kitty are working. The couple marry, but sister Nora moves into Kitty's room before Tod, and he can say nothing without letting out the secret of the trap door. Next Tod plans to marry Nora off to a man who calls from the office. Kitty comes home after a fight with

the doctor and she becomes involved in Tod's schemes instead of Nora. Progress: zero. Nora's office friend gets Kitty a job with the company. A meeting of Kitty and the doctor engineered by Tod comes off badly. Last act. Steve and Kitty are to be married. Doctor arrives, Kitty slams door in his face, Steve discovers Nora, and is taunted by Tod and Grandfather. Doctor falls off the roof trying to get through trap door to Kitty and then the reconciliations and double romance. But Tod learns house is to be sold, so he goes off to arrange wedding of mother to father of his friend, Noodles, in order to save the house.

ACCIDENTALLY YOURS By Pauline Williams Snapp

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The Mosbys, Spencer and Gladys are a lovable, child-like couple who believe in the unbelievable. Gladys believes that anything can happen; Spencer is resigned to the conviction that it usually does. When Spencer wins a coveted award with a novel, Gladys is blissful and not surprised. Spencer, however, accepts the miracle with mixed emotions, for he, alone, knows that he didn't write the book—he *wished* for it. For the bewildered Spencer, an unbelievable but undeniable accumulation of evidence points to only one explanation—the strange Arabian antique he received as an anniversary present is really the fabled Aladdin's lamp. What neither Gladys nor Spencer knows is that the novel was actually written by a

young author, Laurence Conwell, who inadvertently left a copy of his manuscript at the Mosby home. An uproariously funny situation builds to the point of explosion when the same novel is discovered running concurrently in a confessions magazine. Gladys is heartbroken, the rightful author Conwell is shocked at Spencer's supposed plagiarism, and the chairman of the award for the novel is outraged. Things are very black until Gladys accidentally succeeds in extricating husband Spencer from the entire situation. Without ever quite understanding how it happened and still believing in the lamp, Spencer is delighted to find that he has regained his reputation, retained the award, and Gladys's love. (Production restricted in Albuquerque, N. M.)



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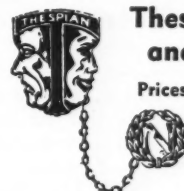
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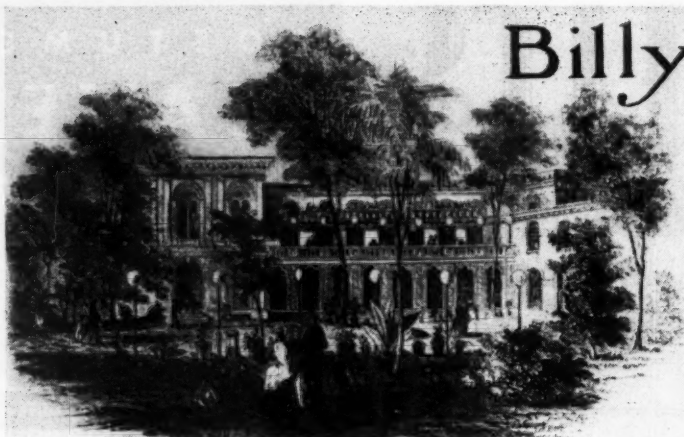
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Billy Niblo

and his
famous
Garden

Early American Musical Comedy

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York 18, N. Y.

THE initial article of this series of studies of American musical comedy attempted to describe the various types of entertainments which flourished from the earliest days of colonization down to the War of 1861-5. We saw that, by and large, they were rather impromptu affairs and quite unlike the musicals of today. The Civil War, as have all wars, gave considerable impetus to the theatre. Here, incidentally, is a theme worthy of great consideration: what is there about a period of war that causes the theatre to flourish? Of particular interest to us is the fact that it is the musical entertainments which do particularly well during these periods of stress.

On September 12th, 1866, *The Black Crook* opened at Niblo's Gardens in New York. This work is credited as the first American musical comedy. Its success was instantaneous. Many theatre historians would have us believe that suddenly a new type of entertainment burst upon the American public. Events of this type do not take place in that way. We do not know the names of all the popular entertainment of the Civil War years, but it is likely that among them were many works which bore a resemblance to *The Black Crook*.

We do know, however, that the ballet was enjoying a great vogue. The producing firm of Jarrett and Palmer, which specialized in ballet, imported a foreign company to dance in an opera at the Academy of Music, then the opera house of New York. A fire, however, forced the closing of the opera house. Meanwhile, the management of Niblo's Gardens was preparing a production of a spectacular new play by an actor, Charles Barras. Jarrett and Palmer arranged to make their ballet troupe the main feature of Barras' play. Scantly clad chorus girls were added, Mr. Barras was paid \$1500 to mollify his opinion of the indignities imposed upon his play and the offering earned

more than a million dollars. It ran for sixteen consecutive months.

Not everyone was as happy over the success of *The Black Crook* as Jarrett and Palmer and the management of Niblo's Gardens. In the NEW YORK WORLD of August 14, 1892, we find a reprinting of a portion of an address delivered by the Rev. Charles B. Smythe at Cooper Union on November 18, 1866. The Rev. Smythe listed *The Black Crook* "among the nuisances of New York." He inveighed against the ladies whose "attitudes were exceedingly indelicate" and who "exposed the figure from the waist to the toe." Such criticism continues down to the present as an accompaniment of American musical comedy.

Nevertheless, with *The Black Crook* the American musical was beginning to take form. One of its immediate effects was that many people rushed to insert ballet into their new productions. A similar movement took place very recently. With the tremendous success of *Oklahoma!* in 1943 — in which ballet played an important part — every successive musical attempted to have ballet sequences. More of that anon!

On March 10, 1868, the next important item in our history was premiered. This was *Humpty Dumpty*, by George L. Fox and music by Strébing. This was in reality pantomime with elaborate ballet by Imre Kiralfy. Niblo's Gardens followed *The Black Crook* with *The White Fawn*, by James Mortimer, but the success and the crowds went to the Olympic Theatre and *Humpty Dumpty*.

Anna Marble did an article for the NEW YORK HERALD of 24 September, 1911, in which she wrote: "During the vogue of the pantomime dozens of Humpty Dumpty companies toured the United States, yet today the white faced trick clown has vanished as com-

In this article, the second in a series of seven papers, Paul Myers discusses early American musical comedy from the Civil War to the turn of the century. We strongly recommend these articles for use in dramatics club meetings. — EDITOR

pletely as though his ever attendant Harlequin had effected the transportation by the aid of his magic bat." After describing the opening of the production, Miss Marble continues: "HUMPTY DUMPTY with Fox in the name part, continued as the attraction at the Olympic until May 15, 1869, when it had been played 483 times. Clifton W. Tayleure was manager of the house during this engagement and is authority for the statement that \$1,406,000 was taken in during this remarkable run."

Then, as today, the success of a piece is followed by a superfluity of imitations. All of the theatres were eager to secure pantomimes. Other clowns came into prominence along with Fox. Among the ones we recall today are Tony Denier, Charles W. Ravel, George D. Melville and Alfred Miaco. These men trained their successors and Humpty Dumpty continued to appear (much as some of the serialized heroes of today's motion pictures) on down to the turn of the century.

As we move in to '70's, we note a vogue for European opera-bouffe — a vogue which continues to the present. The operas of Offenbach were presented with increasing regularity. One of the most popular resorts of New York theatre-goers at this time was Jim Fisk's magnificent Grand Opera House. This edifice still stands, though changing times and tastes have transformed it into a cinema theatre. Fisk imported many outstanding singers from the opera houses of France and Italy to sing in his productions. I include these productions not as part of the native musical production in our theatre but as indicative of the musical tastes of the theatre-goers of the period.

A more indigenous form of entertainment was being offered by the theatre of Tony Pastor. Here such stars as Billy Sheppard, Harry Gurr — the man fish, Mlle. Irma and her statuary poses, "Professor" Morley and his original Punch and Judy, Mlle. Gracie — the

lady with the iron teeth — were holding forth. This was burlesque or vaudeville, as we would term it today. It is a form which has held on for a great many years. It has survived the forays for talent made upon it by the legitimate stage, the film, radio and most recently — television. During the winter of 1949, it staged a successful return. It is a form which has displayed amazing endurance and in which breathes the very life force of the stage.

Another of the popular devices used by the variety entertainers was that of burlesques of the more serious drama. If Edwin Booth or Mme. Janauschek or any other of the great tragedians was enjoying a success, one or more of the variety houses would open with a thinly disguised travesty of the piece. KING LEAR or RICHILIEU would be set to music. The names of the characters would be transposed just enough to form a pun and the situations would be farcical variations on the original. Most of these would be accompanied by hastily written score or popular songs of the day would be given new words and incorporated into the burlesque. We shall see a greater refinement of this when we come upon such artists as Weber and Fields early in the 20th century.

Late in the '70's we begin to note performances of plays by a man who will later play an important role in our story. He was W. S. Gilbert, not yet teamed with Arthur Sullivan, but beginning to write the delightful comedies which evolved into the incomparable Savoy operas. More of them anon!

As late as 1880, we find that Niblo's Garden is still the favorite home of musical production in America. Some of the productions which played in these years at the home of *The Black Crook* are still recalled by veteran theatregoers. Among these, *Around the World in Eighty Days* is one of the most nostalgically recalled. At one of the revivals of this work the management announced with considerable pride that the production had been put on at a cost of more than fifty thousand dollars. Here we have another interesting tie-in with contemporary theatre. On May 31, 1946, Orson Welles presented a modern musical also based on Jules Verne's famous *Around the World in Eighty Days*. No less a personage than Cole Porter wrote the score and Mr. Welles played one of the leading roles and did the staging. It was a fast-paced modern musical, but it lacked the impact which such productions require. I rather fear that those involved lost many times the amount of money so proudly heralded as the cost of the Kralffy Brothers' production at Niblo's Garden.

December 1, 1879, is one of those dates that marks a turning point in the development of the American musical. On that evening, at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in New York, *Pinafore* was given its premiere performance. Operabouffe had been the favorite form of musical entertainment for two decades.

Two Christmas Plays

By Elizabeth McFadden

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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The pendulum was beginning to swing to more realism — to a form of expression that was closer to life. This movement was to go much farther than the evidences of it which we note in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In literature, the great European realists were taking over. In the theatre, too, a similar movement was taking place — a bit later than in the literary field as always. Too much observance has always been taken in the theatre of what the entrepreneurs *think* the public wants. If a certain type of play is a success, it is immediately over imitated. The producers think the public wants only plays about a legal problem, or want only bedroom farces, or fantasies or whatever. Then, some daring individual secures a new script and he likes it. It is not of the vogue but an attempt is made. In most incidents of this kind, the public has been ready for a change for some time. It has been yearning for something different but no one has been willing to try.

Gilbert and Sullivan were the leaders of such a change. Under the aegis of Richard D'Oyly Carte, their TRIAL BY JURY had been produced at the Royalty Theatre in London in 1875. It was a smash hit (in modern theatre parlance). It had been followed by THE SORCERER in 1877 and H. M. S. PINAFORE in 1878. The British had taken the team to their hearts. It was the British troupe under D'Oyly Carte who brought PINAFORE to the United States in 1879. The visit of the D'Oyly Carte troupe to the United States is still the occasion of great rejoicing. Savoyards (the term has been applied to the opera because from 1882 all of the operas were first presented at the Savoy Theatre in London) rush for tickets as soon as the dates are announced. They brag about the number of times they have seen THE MIKADO or THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE or PATIENCE. It is legend that Gilbert himself moved among the chorus that night in sailor garb.

H.M.S. *Pinafore* was followed after a month by *The Pirates of Penzance*. Sullivan conducted and Gilbert directed the initial performance. History, in truth, was being made at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. Gilbert and Sullivan

collaborated for the next fifteen years. Almost each of the works produced continues to enjoy popularity. After *The Gondoliers*, in 1889, they had a dispute over the coat of some new carpeting for the Savoy Theatre. Though the break was healed, they never hit their stride again.

One of the famous stars who began to attract attention at this time was Lillian Russell. She made her debut in 1789, in the chorus of Edward E. Rice's production of *Pinafore*. It must be stated that illegal productions of Gilbert and Sullivan took place all over England and the United States following their first success. The copyright arrangements of the period were full of loopholes, and the theatre managers of the day knew how to find them. Her first success was under the tutelage of Tony Pastor, who operated one of the famous variety halls. Lillian Russell was engaged to sing ballads at the Tony Pastor Theatre, which was directly opposite our old friend — Niblo's Gardens. From solo performances, she went into the burlesques staged at Pastor's and then on into more elaborate productions. In 1884, she made her first performance at the Casino Theatre in *The Sorcerer*, and her name became allied to this theatre.

Miss Russell's fame and popularity held for a greater period than is usually the lot of musical comedy stars.

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Touring American High Schools

By HELEN F. EVANS

Director, The Conservatory Players, Media, Pa.

EVERYONE told me it was "IMPOSSIBLE!" Impossible to present a sensible version of a classic comedy in 50 minutes; impossible to carry an artistically effective set in one Jeep Station Wagon and one small baggage trailer (plus a cast of five); impossible to play eleven performances a week; impossible to have a good company and production on a budget of only a little over \$300.00 a week.

The "Impossible Tour" returned home last spring with 201 performances under its belt. We played one to three performances a day, generally each in a different town. We covered eight mid-western states—20,300 miles of territory ranging anywhere from lovely farmland to vicious winter ice. We appeared before an estimated 300,000 students, and we DID play a classic, Oscar Wilde's *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*, in 50 minutes.

That's our answer to the "IMPOSSIBLE!" challenge the New York professionals tried to hand us.

But wait now, perhaps I'm leaving you too much behind me. Who is WE? The Conservatory Players. What is WE? A professional company organized for the special avowed purpose of providing first class theatre for high school assembly programs.

How did this WE begin? Well, if all telegrams I ever receive in my life are the harbingers of such excitement as that one under my door one November, 1947, evening, I'll never live to be very old. Until that day when S. E. Paulus appeared in my life via Western Union, I was just the usual Broadway hopeful, having good jobs from time to time, but feeding myself by the typing profession. To S. E. Paulus goes the credit for starting the opening up of a completely new channel of theatre, not only in my

life, but, I hope, in the lives of a number of actors and actresses.

The Chicago School Assembly, of which Mr. Paulus is the head, had seen for some time a wide gap in assembly program offerings. There just wasn't any legitimate theatre represented. "Would I accept the chance to produce a play for him?" Paulus telegraphed. Would I! The Conservatory Players went into business at 10:00 the following morning during a long distance call between New York and Chicago.

Then began this "IMPOSSIBLE!" lingo from every side. Sometimes I thought the sceptics were right.

It took months of whittling, and dozens of miles of bus-riding over a summer theatre press agent's territory for me to turn out a script with only the five allowable characters and 50 minutes of running time. I was certainly proud of myself. The only trouble was that at the first reading in September it didn't run 50 minutes at all; it ran 65. It was 'impossible' to cut any more. Even I said so. By midnight of that same night, five exhausted, feeble actors gazed at an imaginative pile of words which had been further deleted to spell the word 'possible'. We may have often joshed that 'twas poor Oscar Wilde's turning body we carried in the gray tarpaulin atop our trailer, but none the less, the show ran 50 minutes and the first battle was over.

I hesitate to take much credit for the efficiency with which the scenery problem was solved. To anyone but a Broadwayite it is never "IMPOSSIBLE!" to create a set from little and make it fit an even littler space. The readers of *DRAMATICS* do it all the time. So I'll briefly describe the essentials of a production which we carried complete save for one boiling pot of water for tea. ("Oh yes, thank you, we have our own tea balls.")

The scenery section consisted of two triple-fold, eight-foot screens, each reversible; and two door frames without shutters, one of which was reversible into a garden door. These could easily be placed at the most advantageous position for each school, and if a stage was too small, they were eliminated in favor of a draped stage. They were carried in a tarp on top of the trailer. Future tours will see a simplification of this set-up due to new shipping space and the elimination of the doors in favor of two more screens.

Props. They, too, were easy. A small folding garden bench, two tiny parallel-built benches, three folding chairs, a 15" wooden prune box for hand props — our entire production. But wait, I've left out the most important item of all. The Army laundry bag of two slip covers and a tablecloth which flipped off in a jiffy to transform Algy's living room into the "IMPOSSIBLE!" second-act garden. I insist on boasting of the 45-second crew change.

HOW THEY WERE STAGED

Edited by Earl W. Blank

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Right here I'm going to stop this saga long enough to offer our apologies. The apology of my entire last year's company, as well as myself, to the sturdy citizens of a number of mid-western towns. We did not mean to cause them to shriek, faint, and lose years off their lives. It's just that in rushing from school to school between shows we HAD "to leave on our faces" — a most disturbing sight to fellow diners and shoppers even in the land where the Indian so long gloried in war paint. If poor Oscar was rolling in his pack above the trailer, I'm sure that Black Hawk was being equally disturbed in his rest above the Jeep.

I must grant that even as late as Christmas time, when we were heading home wearily for a two weeks' rest, little did we think this eleven-shows-a-week itinerary possible. But by April first we had taken on a faster and even more furious pace, faced the sub-zero temperatures of last year's midwestern winter, and were hearing from Mr. Paulus that principals and students alike were writing to Chicago:

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There is one more "IMPOSSIBLE!" the doubters listed — our budget. Ah, what an imp that word could be. Traveling costs are almost higher than even during the war. Actors must be

paid living wages for their work. Enough funds must be put aside to provide for new productions in the future.

A shining new airport bus stands ready to supply the answer to the last of the traveling difficulties. New types of material from American history, short stories, etc. will eliminate racing to beat the dismissal bell. Good actors are waiting to work. But how, oh how, can we continue to bring these wonderful productions to American schools when school budgets are also so terribly limited? It almost turned out to be the impossible "IMPOSSIBLE!" last year.

Cutting our cast to four for the new show will help. But the interest of schools and teachers and students all over the country will go farther toward supporting the idea of professional plays for high schools. It will be a struggle for us as well as for the school folks who sponsor us, but rest assured, with all of us pitching in, it's *not* going to be "IMPOSSIBLE!"

The schools of the midwestern states where we played last season, the eastern ones we plan to visit this season, as well as all the other dramatically-inclined ones across the nation, are doing a magnificent job of keeping the theatrical spirit alive and growing among our young people. We do not aspire to compete in their work.

Our objective will be always and entirely to supplement the school plays with material students wouldn't see otherwise; to offer a professional example of high standard; to bring to schools an exciting hour of real theatre; and to help train a new generation of theatre-goers who have been so woefully neglected by the legitimate stage.

It was an exciting six months on tour during 1948-1949. For me, it was more exciting than any big-time transcontinental Broadway company I've been with. It's going to be exciting again this winter. It's going to be exciting for many more seasons to come, because I refuse to let anyone tell me the problems of high school touring are "IMPOSSIBLE!"

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Here are a few outstanding titles chosen from our files. See our 1950 catalog for the most varied and complete list of usable Christmas material ever offered. (Not one amateurish or out-of-date number listed.)

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Mention Dramatics

What Makes a Play Great

By TALBOT PEARSON

Formerly, Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pa.

IN the previous article we attempted to trace the lifeline of the Theatre from the days of ancient Greece to the present day, taking account of the fact that for several hundred years organized dramatic presentations were in eclipse, and beyond the buffoonery of the vagabond players there was little in the way of entertainment for the peoples who lay within the orbit of Western civilization.

But the Renaissance revived interest in a classic form for drama and it brought also a renewed acquaintance with the literature of pre-Christian civilization. The tragedies and comedies of ancient Greece and Rome have undergone many translations, into every language, since the fall of Constantinople, and Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes and Menander are indispensable names in any drama library. To a lesser degree their Roman counterparts, Seneca, Terence and Plautus belong there also, as writers of tragedy or comedy.

The Greek theatre made clear distinction between comedy and tragedy and this dividing line has existed through the years. It is not an over-simplification to assert that there are really only two types of plays, the TRAGIC and the COMIC, because the essential requirements of those two forms must always remain distinct. Stated crudely, the difference is between a happy and an unhappy ending, but that is not enough.

Aristotle laid down the principle of the three dramatic unities — time, place and action, — and classic Greek tragedy conformed to this thesis. There was another trio of factors involved: the protagonist, the antagonist and the object. Although one or other of the "unities" might be disregarded in some of the lighter forms of drama, these second three factors have maintained their importance throughout the years. Hollywood has reduced the formula to even simpler terms: Act One, *Boy Meets Girl*; Act Two, *Boy Loses Girl*; Act Three *Boy Gets Girl*. And the Victorian melodrama (in five acts) recognized the three essential factors as the Hero (protagonist), the Villain (antagonist) and the Heroine, (the Objective).

Classic tragedy was distinguished by elevated language, the heroic size of the characters and by extreme catastrophe at the finish. Later on the formula for tragedy prescribed that whoever else survived, the leading character (the protagonist) must perish. It was not enough that friends and relatives should be murdered in gruesome fashion; unless Hamlet or Othello themselves died in the last act the deaths of Ophelia or of Desdemona would not make the play a tragedy. This is still a workable yardstick for the tragic

form in drama. Unless the protagonist, the hero, himself, dies, the play, however tragic or harrowing to the emotions, must be classified in some less definite way.

The great Athenian trio of tragic writers faithfully observed the unities, but each approached his subject matter rather differently. With Aeschylus there was the quality of the supernatural, with the Fates toying with human destiny. Sophocles concerned himself with moral law and the vagaries of human nature, while Euripides, the most nearly approximating to our modern approach, was realistic and rather skeptical in his themes. Also, he was the first of the Greek tragic writers to use love as a motivating force in his plots.

Greek comedy flourished in three periods, each clearly marked in retrospect. The "old comedy" of Aristophanes embraced satire and fantasy, even buffoonery and slapstick. Later came "middle comedy" which was more cautious in avoiding personal and political references. "New comedy" was concerned principally with manners.

The entertainment value today of a classic Greek tragedy may be doubted, however good the translation. But the stories and the characters have eternal qualities and continually renew their appeal to contemporary writers and audiences. During the occupation of Paris the production of Anouilh's modern version of *Antigone* made history, and Katharine Cornell played it in New York after the close of the war. The performance of Judith Anderson in Robinson Jeffers' treatment of the *Medea* story is more recent history. These are the themes of which great and undying plays are made.

Greek comedies are not so durable in their qualities. Their themes, just as the plots of contemporary Broadway pieces, are very often for the moment and quickly become dated. But it was this writer's pleasure to see a performance of a "modern" version of Aristophanes' satire, *The Birds*, a few months ago, and to enjoy it as thoroughly as anything currently on Broadway.

The late Harley Granville-Barker once said that the test of time was all important in assessing the value of plays. He referred to "The drama's credit, built up over the years by the accumulation — and time's selection — of a body of plays which have in them unending worth and vitality." The library shelves, then, will be full of titles, teeming with dramatic works which generations of audiences have found good to see and hear. Some of them are never even read outside college class-

This is the second of a series of seven articles by Professor Pearson on "Theatre Enjoyment" addressed primarily to "consumers" of theatre entertainment. The third article will appear in our December issue. — EDITOR

rooms; some are too difficult to cast or too expensive to produce; some are too "dated" to have any appeal.

But Granville-Barker was right to place them to the credit of the Theatre's account. They have stood the test of time and are still worth reading if for no other object than as guides and signposts to each new generation of writers and theatre workers.

The greatness of a play, its enduring quality, depends upon a number of factors. It no longer need be classic in form; it may even be accepted as a tragedy even if the hero survives. A more basic requirement of the tragic form is that the events of the play must be inevitable, that a certain weakness — "a spot no bigger than a pin-head," as Barrie said in *The Will* — shall be evident in the principal character and that this failing, this defect, shall grow and grow until catastrophe is inescapable. The plot is merely the record of the protagonist's efforts to avoid the inevitable end; the audience cannot help, but must look on in terror. This is tragedy. When events from the outside, prompted by malice or other evil intentions, divert the hero-protagonist from his path; when external forces, and not faults of character, determine the outcome, we have melodrama. And that does not mean "meller-drammer." There are plenty of good melodramas being written today and performed without dependence upon black-mustached villains for their thrills. *East Lynne*, *The Drunkard*, and *The Streets of New York* just happened to be the spine-tinglers of their time; they became raucous comedies of our own more realistic theatre because they lacked the enduring qualities which would make them good dramas in any age.

We are entitled to look for certain essentials in any play before we decide it is a good one and that it will last. This is not to say that every play we see will be acted again a hundred years from now, or even have a place of honor on the library shelves. But our enjoyment of a play is likely to be greater if we see the "better" plays, so to speak, rather than the ones of the moment, the purely ephemeral *pièces d'occasion*.

Not every play need contain plot structure in the accepted sense, but it must contain an idea, even though an abstract one. The idea may not relate immediately to the plot. John Dolman Jr., in *THE ART OF PLAY PRODUCTION* mentions Bernard Shaw's *SAINT JOAN* as an example of this. The story of the play is the life, death and canonization of Joan, but the wryly cynical idea running through the play is that saints are all very well in historical retrospect but they are apt to be rather hard to live with at the time. Nothing of that kind comes out, for instance, in Maxwell Anderson's *JOAN OF LORRAINE*, or in Schiller's *DIE JUNGFRAU*. There are only about twenty-five dramatic situations, or "plots," in existence; what makes one play different from or greater than another is the author's treatment of his material, and his abstract idea.



The theatre at Epidauros showing the circular orchestra and one of the entrances used both by audience and actors. The remains of the stagehouse are outside the picture, lower left. This famous Greek theatre was built at the end of the 4th century B. C.

A play may not necessarily be "true to life." Its happenings must, however, be possible, if not probable. One branch of the comedy form, the farce, is often far from being concerned with the kind of doings that are usual in suburban life. Plays like *Charley's Aunt* or *You Can't Take It With You* involve highly improbable situations, to say the least. So does *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and exaggeration and distortion are of paramount importance to all types of farce and farce-comedy.

But whereas farce usually starts out with an absurd premise which the audience is induced cheerfully to accept (this is the prerequisite of a good farce) and then proceeds logically, in the more serious forms of play there must be logic throughout. Tragedy is the most logical of all; comedy is the most acceptable because it is made to appear logical that in this not too happy world some people, at least, do triumph over their difficulties and achieve a happy ending.

Characterization needs to be brilliant. Sometimes the characters are larger than life; like Saint Joan in Shaw's version they might be a little hard to live with — too heroic, or too deep-dyed in villainy — but they, too, are logical and so well-rounded that they live in our memory and become as real persons.

Hamlet and Falstaff, Rosalind and Juliet, Brutus and Cassius are all very real people, completely logical and unlike any others before or since. They are original creations, and their originality is matched by many others created since the days of Elizabeth. They become prototypes for the people of our daily contacts. We recognize Mrs. Malaprop of Sheridan's *THE RIVALS* is everyone who misuses long words; we talk of a silver-cord mother remembering the possessive Mrs. Phelps in Sidney Howard's *THE SILVER CORD*; we speak of one man having "a Falstaffian girth"

or another as being cursed with an Oedipus-complex, and rarely stop to realize the source of such expressions.

Yet sturdy characterization and logical events will not of themselves make a play worthy of seeing and being remembered. A play must possess power and truth and prove itself worthy of repetition, and at each re-hearing produce new shades of meaning and beauty and humor. Any of Shakespeare's tragedies or histories must be seen several times before the depths are revealed. And there are many modern plays in the same mold, such as *Death of a Salesman*, which do not make their full impact at one hearing.

Tragedy, melodrama, comedy and farce are the main types of play we may see and read. It is not always easy to distinguish them. Some of Barrie's, for instance, appear deceptively comic, yet in such plays as *Dear Brutus*, with its tragic inevitability — the characters cannot escape from their own weakness; there is no second chance — is inexpressibly, tragically sad. O'Neill does not make any bones about it; tragedy is his concern and his business, and whether he is working with a classic Greek theme as in *Mourning Becomes Electra* or in a freer form as in *Beyond the Horizon* or *Anna Christie* he hews to the line of inescapable doom.

Comedy and farce are often so intertwined that it is hard to draw a line between them. Usually the theme is comedic, that is to say it is directed towards the happy ending in a logical progression. But it may divagate and become farcical, improbable, exaggerated and distorted on the way. *You Can't Take It With You* is a case in point. It is too real, too human, for mere farce. It contains much that is profound truth.

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Mention Dramatics

How to Select the One-Act Play*

By ERNEST BAVELY

Executive Secretary, The National Thespian Society, Cincinnati, Ohio

PERHAPS one of the most sensible set of rules for selecting a play for theatre production, one-act or full-length, is found in the book, *Producing Plays*, by C. B. Purdom. The book was published in 1930 by E. P. Dutton & Company. Mr. Purdom's rules may be stated in the form of questions as follows:

1. Why do we want a play? What purpose or need are we trying to satisfy?
2. Does the play please the director?
3. Does the play please the cast?
4. Does the play please the audience?
5. Is the production of the play practicable?

If we appraise a play on the basis of these very simple questions, giving each an honest answer, we have a pretty reliable formula for selecting the one-act play, or for selecting any other type of play. Let's examine these questions more closely.

Obviously, the purpose or need we are trying to satisfy will influence greatly our choice of play. Presumably, the one major reason which comes to mind in giving any play is to give pleasure — pleasure to all who are associated with its production — pleasure to performers — pleasure to the audience. But we who work in the educational theatre know that there are other reasons which influence our choice of play in full or in part. We may want to teach something to our students and perhaps to our audience; we may have a message to convey. We may want to promote a certain cause or project. Perhaps we are giving the play for the purpose of raising funds. Or we may be looking for a play which will win at the drama festival or contest. Many other reasons can be cited. Our primary responsibility here is that we make doubly certain that we know what that reason is; that we examine it carefully from all possible angles.

Does the play please the director? It is rather foolish for anyone to attempt to give a play which he does not like or can't warm up to in one fashion or another. Certainly, it is difficult to visualize a conscientious director giving all his art, all his enthusiasm, and all his energy to the production of a play which does not please him. Perhaps there are directors who are quite ready to assume the burden of directing a play which someone else has chosen without any thought of pleasing the director. But in instances of this nature the director's agreeableness to take on such a task is largely motivated by

an attractive fee or by some other consideration. Talbot Pearson, in his very fine book, *Encores on Main Street*, points out that the director will do his best work "on a play which has magnetism for him." That, it seems to me, is pretty good as one of several tests for estimating the worth of a play.

Does the play please the actors? As in the case of the director, the actors, too, must find some large measure of satisfaction in the play as a play before they can hope to put their best into its production. Every director knows that students especially do much better work when they are presenting a play on which they are "sold", a play which has magnetism for them too. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to find in our educational theatre, plays which the performers don't like. It is not uncommon to find that the choice of play is made by the director, without his consulting with his students, or perhaps by the principal who consults neither the director nor the students. We can understand why, in the professional theatre, the choice of plays is usually left up to one person. He is often the person who pays the production bills. It's an entirely different story in the educational theatre. Some of the most successful school and college directors I know are those who give their students the opportunity to help select the plays which are to be given during the season. In this way they make certain that the plays which are chosen do have considerable appeal for those who are to perform in them. It often facilitates matters considerably for the director to take upon himself the task of selecting the play and offering it to his students on a "take it or leave it" basis, but that is neither democratic nor educational theatre. It is theatre by dictation.

Our third question is whether the play pleases the audience? This is one question which we must answer with complete frankness if we want our efforts in play production to be successful. In Barnard Hewitt's book, *Art and Craft of Play Production*, we find an entire chapter devoted to the role of the audience in a theatre production. Professor Hewitt establishes two points which we need to keep in mind: 1. That an audience comes to the theatre to be entertained. 2. That the audience is a collaborator in the production. As directors and as actors, we must satisfy these two audience requirements if we wish to stay in the business of producing plays. If our choice of play does not please our audience, it is certain that audience will not be a sympathetic collaborator. The attitude of the audience will be negative, destructive. The best way to avoid tragic experiences of this nature is for the director and others who may participate in the selection of the play to make certain that they have some knowledge of the audience, of what it likes, and what it does not like in theatre. There is the group, for example, which favors light comedies and farces — the type of play which produces laugh-

ter and nothing else. There's the audience that prefers something of a more serious nature — the plays of Maxwell Anderson, the dramas of Eugene O'Neill, or the tragedies of Shakespeare. With some knowledge of the audience in his possession, the person whose task it is to select the play or plays is in a position to make a satisfactory choice. If the play is the kind which will please the audience, the producer has overcome one of the major obstacles in the serious business of staging plays.

Mr. Purdom's fifth rule is that the production of the play must be practicable. If a play, regardless of its literary or dramatic values, does not come within the production facilities of the producing group, it is obviously not the right choice for that group. Besides meeting conditions of production such as staging, lighting, costuming, etc., there is the equally important problem of seeing that the play has roles which can be cast satisfactorily from the talent available. The sum which must be paid as a royalty fee, if the play has a royalty charge, must also be considered. Can we afford to pay it in view of other expenses we will have in producing the play? Admittedly, these matters are elementary, but it is surprising to see how many amateur groups fail to take careful note of production problems of this nature.

These five rules do not, however, guarantee the type of plays which, in Mr. Purdom's own words, "quicken the imagination, delight the senses, and arouse the intelligence." A play may easily meet a certain need, please the director, cast, and a particular audience, come within the production facilities available, and still fall short of what is good drama and good theatre. One needs only to attend certain plays given by amateur theatre groups, not to mention certain plays given by professionals, to discover how inferior such plays really are when compared with the better plays which are available and which will give far better results if properly presented. For this reason it is extremely important, especially in the educational theatre, that the director possess a well-rounded knowledge of what constitutes good drama; that he possess a set of standards by which he can judge the literary and dramatic worth of a play. It is in this respect that I feel that entirely too many high school directors fall short of the qualifications expected of them. Entirely too many of them simply do not know how to pick plays of distinct merit — plays which have genuine qualities — plays worthy of the time and energy spent to produce them.

Above all other tests and criteria which may be employed in selecting a play, two broad considerations should be kept in mind by those of us who are engaged in the educational theatre. 1. What does the play do to those who produce it — the director, the cast, and the audience which, as stated above, is a real collaborator in the production? 2. What does the producing group do to the play?

We know that both of these broad considerations are greatly influenced by the nature of the play itself. A good play does much good to those who pro-

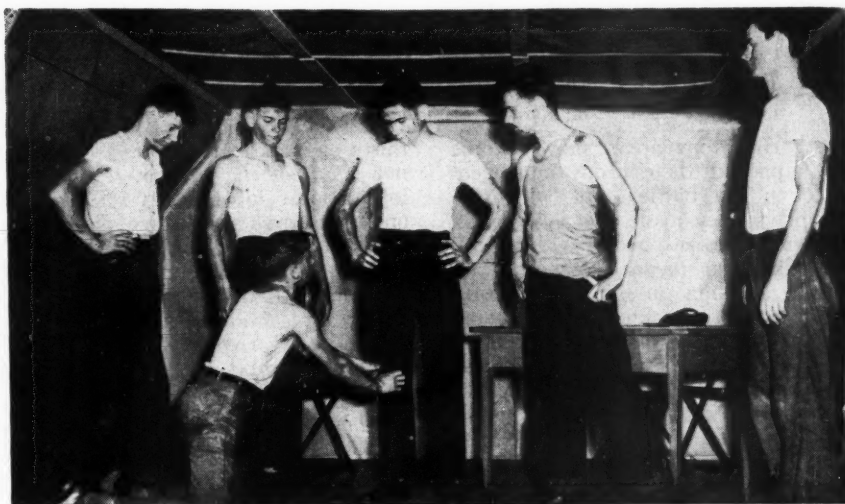
*Subject of an address given by the author at the Ohio Conference for Speech Education, Columbus, Ohio, October 16, 1948.

duce it. In turn those who produce it can do much good with a good play.

Since we are concerned primarily with the one-act play, let's consider briefly some of the elements of a "good" one-act play. 1. The play has one well-developed central idea or premise. This central idea, sometimes called the theme, or thesis, or driving force, or plot, or basic emotion, should be presented clearly enough that it can be stated in one sentence. For example, in *Romeo and Juliet* the premise is "Great love defies even death." The premise or theme in *Macbeth* is "Ruthless ambition leads to its own destruction." 2. There is conflict in the play. This conflict may result from a clash of ideas or ideals, it may come from motives or from personalities. The conflict may arise from within the characters themselves. 3. The play has plausible characters — it concerns people that we can accept as being true to life. 4. The play has convincing dialogue — dialogue that helps move the action to a climax. 5. The play is composed of such elements that it will challenge the highest creative and artistic abilities of all who are associated with its production. 6. The play is good theatre — it plays well on the stage. 7. The play is free of highly sophisticated or advanced roles, free of vulgarity or profanity, free of objectional subject matters, free of sordid or unwholesome presentation of characters and scenes. The professional theatre may get by with plays which are vulgar or profane, but we who labor in the school theatre need not stoop to this level to obtain plays for our needs. There are many clean, wholesome plays from which we can choose. 8. The play is composed of such dramatic stuff that we are better off for having worked with it, and the audience is better off for having seen it.

It is safe to assume that a one-act play which possesses these qualifications will please the director. It will prove worthy of the time and energy spent on it by the cast, and it will offer genuine theatre entertainment to the audience. Even the least theatre-minded audience will respond well to a good play, for a good play has in it the stuff of which life is made.

Some twenty years of close association with educational drama groups in our secondary schools — and today secondary schools are perhaps the principal producers of one-acts in this country — have convinced me that certain other practical steps will help in a real sense in locating satisfactory plays. *The first of these steps is to begin the selection of plays long before they are produced.* I know of directors who spend much of their summer vacation reading plays from which they will make up their production program during the coming year. I know directors who spent much



Scene from the one-act play, **Submerged**, given by students of St. Marys, Pa., Catholic High School (Thespian Troupe 658). Directed by Sister M. Anita, O.S.B.

time during the fall reading and considering one-acts from which they expect to find a satisfactory choice for the spring festival or contest. Under no circumstances should the choice of play be postponed until a few weeks before the time of production. Selections made under pressure, under requirements to meet a deadline, are rarely good selections. If the group plans to enter a drama festival or contest, it is most important that the choice be made as early as possible in the season, and not wait, as was true in at least one instance this past year, until three weeks before the date of the festival.

Secondly, many plays should be read and considered before a choice is agreed upon. And the reading should be of the plays themselves, and not confined to the descriptive statements found in the publisher's catalogue. Unfortunately, not many good one-acts are being written these days. Our best writers find that the writing of one-acts does not pay well; they prefer to give their time to the writing of full-length plays — the kind which have some chance of being produced on Broadway. This scarcity of good one-acts makes it imperative that we read widely, that we read the one-acts of such masters as Eugene O'Neill, Zona Gale, Paul Green, Lady Gregory, and Rachel Field. Samuel French publishes a number of anthologies of one-acts under the title *One Act Plays for Stage and Study*. Excellent collections are also offered by Walter H. Baker Company, by Row, Peterson & Company, and by The Dramatic Publishing Company. We should consult all of these sources before we make a final choice.

Thirdly, we should develop the habit of judging plays on their own merits, and not on the basis of authorship or publisher. Excellent plays have been written by persons who are comparatively unknown in the theatre world.

Often their plays are published by firms which cannot afford to purchase expensive Broadway shows, with the result that such firms may not be regarded as the depositories of our first-rate plays. That view may hold true of the full-length plays of our better known dramatists, but it is not true in the case of one-acts. Let's look for quality in the play — other considerations are secondary.

A fourth step concerns the art of how to read plays we are considering for production. Someone has pointed out that we need to read with the director's eye. We should read with imagination and alertness to the theatre possibilities of a play. Entirely too many educational theatre directors read plays in exactly the same manner they read an O. Henry short story. When we read with imagination we do several things. We are able to *see* the characters in action on our particular stage. We are able to *hear* the dialogue spoken by the characters. We are able to judge the play in relation to the size and conditions of the stage and auditorium we plan to use. Above all else, we are able to sense to a degree at least the general effect of the play upon the performers and the audience.

It is my sincere conviction that we will all do much better, not only with regard to the quality and suitability of the plays we select, but also with regard to the general advancement of the educational theatre, if we each prepare our own list of carefully chosen plays — a list to which we add a few choice new titles each season. We will be certain then that the titles we choose furnish us with material which does meet our particular needs.

Selecting the one-act play involves no secret formula or act of mystery. First we must teach ourselves the essentials of good drama. Secondly, we must read widely and intelligently until we have found the play which meets our particular needs as will no other play.

Creative Fun for All

By BARBARA CHAPIN
Director, The Carnival Caravan, Wellsville, New York

WHEN inventive show people packed their props and went to the battle front with top-flight plays, they made two discoveries. First: audiences responded with an understanding far beyond expectations. Second: startling in its implications, thousands of the soldiers were seeing their first legitimate theatre.

For each G. I. to whom theatre was new, there are additional thousands of men, women and children in every corner of our country who have no idea what the personal give-and-take between audience and live actor can mean.

You know, and I know, what fun it is to be part of a play. We would feel a real loss if we thought we could never act again. Imagine never being able to see another play! Yet this happens to many, many people, and it could happen to any one of us, as actor or as spectator.

If you want to act, to write, direct, stage or costume plays, the first thing you need is experience. With school behind, where can that first job be found? Broadway is oversupplied with beginners now. Because there is a severe limit on the number of plays which can be housed successfully on the big street, there is the same limit on the number of apprentices who can be trained through actual work. What is needed is more of the kind of opportunity provided by fine community playhouses and by summer theatres. But there are only a handful of such groups, whereas places for experimental work should be within reach of every interested person.

If you only wish to "spectate," you still need a theatre playing something worth seeing. Even in the midst of cities and summer theatre I have been unable to see *Death of a Salesman* or *Lamp at Midnight*, but I have had some

thirty chances to see *John Loves Mary*, not counting the movie. This sort of lopsidedness in selection reflects sadly on the experimental nature of the small theatres which do exist. But even this is a vast improvement over the thousands in farm districts which have absolutely no theatre, and the hundreds upon hundreds of towns too small for even the most humble touring company.

So on one side we see an overabundance of talent seeking a chance to use and practice its skill, and on the other, scores of communities, eager and hungry for live entertainment of good quality. This spells one word: CHALLENGE.

Here is one plan in answer. THE CARNIVAL CARAVAN is built for those towns and villages removed not only from theatres, but from museums, bookstores, and often even from a library. It is based on the belief that the tools and techniques for creative work are important and should be available to everybody.

THE CARNIVAL CARAVAN will use specially designed trucks to transport from town to town the professional core of a "community festival." It will roll in and be set up as a circus is, with bright colored tents, and music in the air. Its museum-quality displays, gallery, music hall, bookbrigade, recreation centers and theatre will form a model "community center."

Before it comes, for three months people in the area will have been working on their part of the program. Crew members, consulting with school and church, civic and agriculture groups, will have found what interests are already strong, what traditions treasured, and

throughout the whole section people will be assembling concerts and exhibits as their contribution to the big show.

Carnival Caravan Week will tell a story which will always say essentially this: Art is fun! It is part of every day, and part of everything we do. It is a way of doing things in the best possible manner.

The Carnival Caravan will include galleries with exhibits of painting and sculpture, of prints easy to own, and priceless originals loaned by the great museums. There will be shows of architecture, crafts and industrial design; modern "useful objects," and treasures from ancient times. Artists will be working: a potter, a weaver, a painter, a silver-smith; they will have equipment to be used, and people will be urged not only to watch, but to set type, pull proof on the Caravan press and experiment with binding, to model and draw and paint. It isn't important how expert these first tries look; this is a time for exploration — the discovery of how things are made and the feel of materials. The measure of success is enjoyment.

In the Music Hall will be concerts and dance recitals, debates and talks — some by professionals, some by local people. Thus young musicians, for instance, will have an opportunity to test their ability to "hold an audience." Monologues and short skits with professional actors will give students the experience of working with those who have timing, voice control, stage business, etc., "down pat."

Each evening there will be square and round dancing, sometimes to special records, sometimes with a real orchestra. Strolling musicians, puppeteers and a clown will amuse those who stop for refreshment, and sing, choir recitals, and starlight music will be outdoor features. A pint-size carousel and ferris wheel are part of the play school where up-to-sevens may be safely "parked" to free adults for the more serious events. The Cartoon House will show films related to all the other arts: shorts and documentaries, training and foreign films; all those rare and unusual items seldom seen outside the so-called "art theatre."

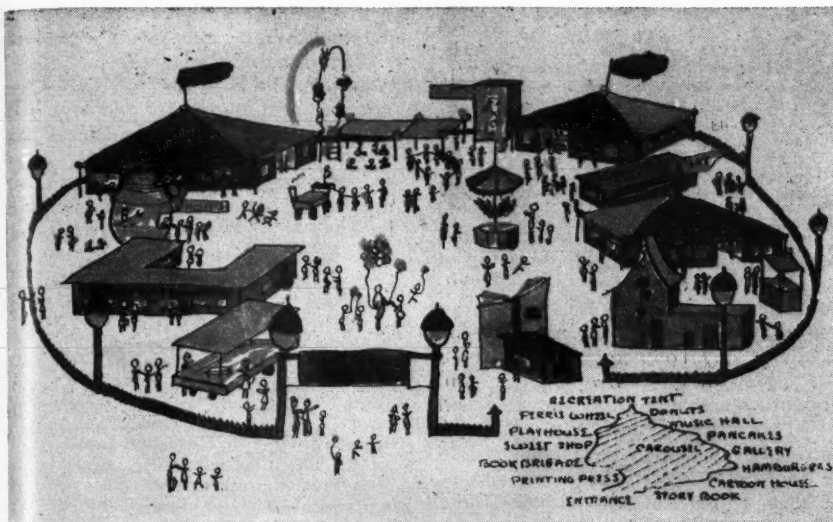
Fine printing, illustration and binding exhibits will be featured at the Bookbrigade, which will house a browsing collection of stories, drama, dance and art books, and catalogs, announcements, leaflets on how and when and where. As general information center, the book staff will be ready to give advice on anything from submitting a manuscript in correct form to finding latest tips on remodeling a kitchen. Reams of excellent material are available; the trick is knowing how to put your hand on the right information at the right moment.

At the center of the program is . . . theatre.

In a Story Book House children under twelve will invent, direct and act out their own stories for each other. Im-



At the test demonstration at Chautauqua Institution, the audience left exhibits to watch the square dancing on the quadrangle.



Sketch showing trucks set up for the show: left to right, the printing press, bookbrigade, Pooh's Honey Pot, Theatre, Play School, Homer's Donut Machine, Music Hall, Clubmobile, Gallery, Grill, Cartoon House, and Story Book House.

promptu skits and charades will add to the fun, and all programs will be interchangeable so that a story hour might include a skit brought over from a very successful rehearsal. Central staging will be used for many productions. It is an exciting introduction because the audience becomes such an intimate part of the play. Also, it requires less scenery and space, giving towns more leeway in starting programs with limited equipment.

However, conventional staging is not to be slighted. The Music Hall and Theatre programs will be scheduled to allow for plays using regular scenery, props and stage directions.

The quality of plays will be all-important. Shakespeare, Aeschylus, Shaw, and we hope ABE LINCOLN will be part of the first tour. All plays will be aimed to set sky-high standards. Too many small theatre groups choke themselves by sticking to "simple, sure-fire items." Good people get bored and quit when too little is demanded of them. A fine script inspires a fine presentation.

Exhibits and events will relate to the plays. There may be showings of early editions of Shakespeare, or the short film of Old Vic performances; the school English class may study *Hamlet* the month previous, or the art class make their year's project sets for *As You Like It*. Original dramas by local authors will not, however, be forgotten in the excitement over the Bard.

Well . . . so the Caravan will give everyone a good time together. People will try new things, gain new understanding of art forms, see fine shows and exhibits. Their interest will be awakened. What then?

Through ties with school's, clubs, local, state and national groups, plans are laid for "follow-through." Suppose, for example, the excitement created by the plays starts a local crowd talking of a Little Theatre. They will be able to ask help from advisory groups, from state extension services, some of which have costume

and scenery "pools;" they may consult on costs, needed equipment, time schedules; in other words, every encouragement and available aid will be placed within reach. And a central office stands ready to answer questions which arise as plans progress. Each part of the program is backed by this type of service, so it can take root in each community interested.

But at best THE CARNIVAL CARAVAN can only serve as an example of what can be done, giving people a happy experience, and a strong push in the direction of their interest. It can supply the tools and the "know-how," but the actual spark which will make art a vital part of any community must come from the citizens themselves. It is their energy and imagination which will plant the program in firm ground.

In the unusual movie RED RIVER, John Wayne as a young man looks out over the vast plains and empty prairies and says to the boy he has just "adopted," "twenty years from now that land will hold the best herd in all of Texas." When we see him next, twenty years have passed, and though new troubles loom, his dream has come true.

THE CARNIVAL CARAVAN is that same kind of long-range pioneer venture. Now we look out over what Irwin Edman calls "desert islands of our American culture." Twenty years from now its dream may be realized, and wherever the Caravan has rolled, there will be permanent community centers serving farmers and small town people with constructive and creative kinds of entertainment in which they, themselves, play a part.

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Mention Dramatics

THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library
New York 18, N. Y.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Requests should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

OFFICIALLY the new theatre season begins each year on the first day of July. In effect, it usually starts during the first or second week of September at which time five or six new productions invite the New York drama critics and other interested parties to give them consideration. The season of 1949 - 50 is an extremely tardy one. During the past several years, the early season entries have been rather dismal failures. With few exceptions, the productions which opened early in September were very short-lived. It put the seasons off on a bad note. The first hit of last season was *Edward, My Son*, which waited until the 30th of September before bowing at the Martin Beck Theatre.

Blackouts

The people of the theatre are a superstitious lot. The word went around that September was a bad month and the result has been that only *one* production has opened during this month. This was not by any means a new item or one that involved any great artistic or financial risk. Ken Murray's *Blackouts* has been playing with great success for several years in Hollywood. The folk of the film colony had returned again and again as the bill changed and many visitors from the Broadway theatre had enjoyed Mr. Murray's series of skits and musical interludes. *Blackouts* preceded by only a very little the current re-awakening of interest in vaudeville. It is reminiscent of the kind of entertainment offered by the two-a-day with a little more emphasis on the dramatic. The opinion among the drama critics was that Ken Murray's attempt at entertainment was rather heavy-handed. Local audiences, however, seem to have echoed the sentiments expressed by those of the west coast and *Blackouts* is doing very well at the box office. It will probably continue to fill the Ziegfeld Theatre for the major part of the season.

October Shows

As if waiting only for the first fall month to close, several producers have announced early October openings. Among the attractions that will become available quite soon after the time of this reporting are these: Shakespeare's delightful *Twelfth Night*, staged by Valentine Windt, will be the first of the season's revivals. Arnold Moss, Frances Reid, Nina Foch and Carl Benton Reid head the cast of this promising entry.

A few weeks later the Theatre Guild will present Katharine Hepburn in a new production of *As You Like It*. Maurice Evans and Edna Best are even now on the road warming up a double bill of plays by Terence Rattigan, which have met with great favor in London. Another importation from England will be W. Douglas Home's *Yes, M' Lord*, which the Shuberts are bringing into the Booth Theatre at the north end of the Alley which bears the name of these producing brothers. This play has already enjoyed a very successful run in London under the title, *The Chiltern Hundreds*.

Musical Shows

Several interesting new musicals are on their way to Broadway theatres. George Abbott, whose last season's entry *Where's Charley?* is still drawing capacity audiences to the St. James Theatre, is the sponsor of the first musical since *Miss Liberty*. With book and lyrics by Jean and Walter Kerr and music by Jay Gorney, *Touch and Go* will soon light up the Broadhurst. Several stage favorites are being re-done this season as musicals. Among them are *The Pursuit of Happiness*; the popular hit of the '20's, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and Lillian Hellman's drama, *The Little Foxes*.

Ballet Entertainment

Ballet is to be well represented along Broadway this season. The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is already ensconced in the Metropolitan Opera House, where they will play for another several performances. Almost upon their heels, the Sadler's Wells Ballet will open there on the 9th of October. This marks the first appearance in the United States of this illustrious British troupe and their coming has been widely heralded. Robert Helpmann's choreographic setting of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the offering of this company which attracts me the most. A bit later — just to maintain an international note — the ballet troupe from the Paris Opera will invite the New York ballet audience to inspect it.

Travel Beyond Broadway

Your Broadway critic has spent most of the past six weeks looking over the theatre activities of the non-Broadway playhouses. A vacation and a borrowed automobile afforded the long-sought opportunity to get across the country and have a look. As many of you who have been reading my articles have surmised,

I am tremendously interested in the national theatre. Along with many others, I have been deploring the fact that the American theatre for too many years has been confined to an ever dwindling section of Manhattan Island. Little vigor can be expected from a theatre so confined. September and August is not an ideal time to go theatre touring because so many places are closed at that time. Nevertheless that was the period at my disposal, and so my wife and I set out on the following junket of the theatre.

Our first stop was Pittsburgh — the home of the Pittsburgh Playhouse and the Carnegie Institute of Technology, of whose Drama Department I had heard and read so much. From there, we went to Cincinnati where we met for the first time our editor, Ernest Bavelly. Though we had corresponded for several years and were in close contact via *DRAMATICS*, we had never actually met. He and his family were most hospitable toward us and I was privileged to see the site from which so much of the activity of our National Thespian Society emanates. This was, indeed, one of the high spots of our trip.

The route went southward via St. Louis, where the Municipal Opera was concluding another successful season, and on to New Orleans. It was a great disappointment not to see any productions at either Le Petit Theatre de Vieux Carre or at the New Orleans Little Theatre. We resolved, however, to visit this fascinating city at a more opportune theatre time as soon as possible. Heading westward, we next stopped in Dallas, a very theatre-conscious metropolis. It is here that Margo Jones has been doing so remarkable a job with her Theatre '47, '48, '49 and, one hopes, on and on. This venture is one of the most important steps in the current development of American theatre. In the Gulf Oil Playhouse on the Fair Grounds in Dallas, Miss Jones has presented a great many new American plays and important revivals. Some idea of the magnitude of her work can be gained from a perusal of her schedule for the season just beginning. Opening on November 7th with Shaw's *Heartbreak House*, the repertory will include the first American production of Sean O'Casey's *Cock-A-Doodle Dandy*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The School for Scandal* and three new plays. Such an undertaking is, truly, phenomenal. It was a thrill just to see the four walls of this playhouse.

Not very far from the Gulf Oil Playhouse, the open-air operetta was flourishing. We saw a production of the immortal *Show Boat*. The cast was largely the same as that of the last revival in New York — Carol Bruce, Ralph Dunke, Larry Brooks, Beverly Tyler. One of my early theatregoing thrills was the original Ziegfeld production of *Show Boat* at the Great Glorifier's own theatre. The cast included Helen Morgan, Charles Winninger, Edna May Oliver.



Scene from **Twelfth Night** which opened at the Empire Theatre on October 3 with Valentine Windt of the University of Michigan as director. Among those who appear in this scene are Truman Smith as Fabian, Arnold Moss as Malvolio, Carl Benton Reid as Sir Toby Belch, and Ruth Enders as Maria. (Photograph courtesy of Pix, Inc.)

Norma Terriss, Eva Puck and Sammy White, Jules Bledsoe and Aunt Jemima. The late Jerome Kern's score has since become a part of America's musical heritage. Each successive revival I have seen reveals another gem of which I had not previously been aware. The little heard "Life Upon the Wicked Stage" is one of the gayest musical caricatures of the theatre of all such attempts. It was a treat to sit out under the Texas sky and hear *Show Boat* once again.

While in Dallas, too, we enjoyed meeting John Rosenfield, the critic of the Dallas Morning News. Mr. Rosenfield's columns had long been known to me. They had been a daily part of my newspaper reading and clipping for the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library. Mr. Rosenfield's ability to criticize all types of entertainment media is remarkable. It is his duty to review theatre, film, ballet, opera and concert—and all of these he does with equal agility and understanding.

We proceeded from Dallas across Texas to El Paso, Tucson and over the mountains into California. One night was spent near San Diego and then up to Los Angeles. Theatrical activity in this community has been at a peak. The Turnabout Theatre continues to be one of the favorites. Here Elsa Lanchester, Lotta Goslar and The Yale Puppeteers have been holding forth. Henry Epstein had recently done a very successful production of *Rain* with June Havoc as Sadie Thompson. This dramatization of the Somerset Maugham story, *Miss Thompson*, has been a perennial favorite for two decades. First presented in the United States with Jeanne Eagles, it became one of the all-time stage hits. In 1935, another major production of it was done on Broadway with Tallulah Bankhead. Miss Havoc, too, appeared in a musical comedy based upon the play about ten years ago. It would be impossible to list here all of the people who have done it in revivals here and there. It is a commendable

undertaking to revive such plays from time to time and to expose the play to new audiences and to new actors and directors.

Two theatres just outside of Los Angeles attracted our attention. In Pasadena, at the famous Playhouse, we saw a production of *Strange Bedfellows*. When seen in New York last season, this play failed to impress me very deeply. Upon re-seeing, it seemed a cleverer piece than I had imagined but not of very much artistic importance. It is almost a re-working of the *Lysistrata* theme. Set in the San Francisco of the early twentieth century, the comedy revolves around the attempt of women to secure the powers of suffrage. The humor is of rather a low calibre—some of it beneath the standards of less than high-grade burlesque. The Pasadena Playhouse production did everything for the script that production could do. I cannot but regret that so many well established theatre groups feel called upon to perform plays that are below both the talents of their company and the taste and appreciation of their audiences.

In a lovely spot on the Palisades near Santa Monica, Garrison P. Sherwood is operating the Pacific Palisades Playhouse. Mr. Sherwood very hospitably allowed us to sit in on a rehearsal of *MY SISTER EILEEN* in which Una Merkel was playing Ruth. Here again, we were in the face of a very familiar play but one of more genuine fun than *STRANGE BEDFELLOWS*. The Playhouse is one of the most perfectly equipped of all the theatres we visited. Great thought has been expended in its planning and execution.

Kenneth MacGowan gave us a lot of time during a tour of the facilities of the Drama Department of the University of California at Los Angeles. Other people made it possible for us to minutely inspect two of the large cinema studios—Paramount and Radio-Keith-Orpheum. At the former studio, it was most interesting to see photographs of the research done for the sets of the

filming of *The Heiress*. This play is a dramatization of Henry James' *Washington Square*, which Wendy Hiller and Basil Rathbone had done so beautifully in the New York theatre and elsewhere about the country. Many of the photographs for the film's scenery were taken about New York in the section in which we reside. It was most amusing to come upon these scenes three thousand miles from home.

The trip back to New York was too hurried to allow for very much theatre-going. Some of the country itself was as dramatic and thrilling as anything we could imagine. I had never been west of Chicago ere this and the trip was consequently terribly exciting. It was a journey, too, that will continue to have importance for me and for my work.

I trust my readers will forgive this over-long odyssey, but I hoped to share with fellow theatre devotees something of the impressions of our national theatre. Though my activities allow me to share in the theatre life of our country's theatre capital, I have long regretted that I had not a wider knowledge of the doings in other parts of the nation. I do not now feel equipped to volunteer as an authority on the subject (even for that part of the country which I visited), but I do feel that I have gained a deeper understanding of some of the problems we face.

Now, returned to New York, we are most eager for local theatre activity to get under way. The theatre here looks no less wonderful but we can look upon it as a part of a whole. The New York theatre should not be the be all and end all. It should not be the sole goal of all theatre aspirants in this country. I hope to be able to report its activities for you for some time to come, but I hope that the perspective gained of it during my recent voyage will continue to remain with me.



Virginia Gregg, Ed Bagley, and Dick Powell, Stars of N.B.C.'s **Richard Diamond**.

The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1949-50 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

"RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE"

NBC — Monday

YOU don't have to be very observant to realize that one of the latest moves in radio has been towards the private detective type of show. Look at any radio page in the daily paper and you are bound to see at least one thriller woven around a central character who solves the mystery after a succession of harrowing experiences. Sometimes the plays are terrible mixups; have confusing plots, subplots and counterplots. Too frequently there is inferior writing, so that the obvious to you is a long time in reaching the super-sleuth. Or the final outcome is a horrible twisting of the facts at hand. The literary critic would call it the use of "deus ex machina," a forced and obvious contrivance. Or the spoken lines are stilted and unconversational. Too frequently the lack of acting ability contributes to the already weak story and the overall result is one of slow-moving, tiresome drama. It would be more correct to use the word "melodrama."

A series of fast-moving dramas entitled *Richard Diamond, Private Detective*, with Dick Powell in the male role avoids all these errors and provides a model which might well be copied by many of the other shows of this kind.

The program opens with a fitting theme which neatly sets the mood, not being ominous and heavily dramatic. Then Richard Diamond (Dick Powell) appears and sets the scene in a

short monologue. More than just an ordinary narrator, he is a painter in words, aptly describing New York, the city in which he once served on the police force as a detective and the locale of his adventures as a private "eye."

Those listeners familiar with New York cannot help appreciating how effective his descriptions are. Powell consistently captures the mood of this great metropolis in a matter of minutes. He makes you feel its weight and movement, its crushing force, its splendor and massiveness, its wide avenues and narrow slums.

The opening narration establishes a mood of movement and flippancy which is maintained throughout the program. The dialogue of "Richard Diamond" is perfectly written for this type of drama. Without being curt, it is colorful in the twentieth century American idiom. There is quick repartee all the way through, with a liberal sprinkling of bright figures of speech.

By what is obviously good writing, the plots of the weekly stories are simple, though satisfying, and serve as excellent vehicles for the snappy chatter. Don't be mistaken, this does not mean that the stories are hackneyed or not worth hearing. They are good, plausible, uncomplicated stories, easy to listen to, not defying understanding, further improved by even better talk.

As a typical example, take the story of the woman who comes to Diamond for aid in track-

Mr. Scharer's article for this month was prepared in collaboration with S. I. Mills of New York University.—EDITOR

ing down the murderer of her husband. After a series of trials and errors, Diamond, in the company of the police, visits his client's home and finds her there dead. By an assimilation of facts already made known to the listener, the sleuth has a hunch. Playing it, he leads the killer to his office so that the police can make the arrest; but before the killer arrives, Diamond continues his hunch and searches his own office for the motive in the murders — \$200,000 in cash. He spots the outline of the bundle of money in his office electric light globe and elects to leave it there when hearing the murderer at the door. He makes for his desk and sits nonchalantly at it, a .38 caliber gun between his knees; and the expected visitor walks in.

The listener is given a story and situation in less than twenty minutes, and for the next five minutes or so there is a suspenseful scene. You are the witness at the result of the sleuthing. You are face to face with the killer. This offers the perfect setup for the killer to shoot your hero right before your eyes, or ears). Supposing the police do not show up in time? Perhaps you cannot identify yourself with Diamond, but his talk, his calmness, his warmth and goodness have won you over; and even though you may not see yourself in the lead role, certainly the lead is a good friend of yours, a person to whom you don't want to see any harm done.

Diamond tells the killer that as a good detective he has figured out the mystery, that while this man before him was murdering the husband, the wife — supposedly in league with the killer — was hiding the money. But she hid it in such a place that the killer couldn't find it. Angry at the doublecross, he killed the wife. And now, as planned in the hunch, he has followed Diamond to the office, sure that the loot is hidden there. As a matter of fact, it had been brought to the office by the wife when she was pretendedly soliciting the detective's aid.

You realize that in the course of the radio production none of the details that led to the denouement was hidden from you. Any listener might have solved the mystery with the facts given if he weren't so engrossed in the story unfolding before him, a story which begins with an interesting narration and builds in intensity until the scene in which you wonder what is going to happen to Diamond. You are not surprised when the police show silently in the doorway behind the killer. After all, you expected them. You are not surprised either that the killer, caught between them and Diamond, threatens to use the latter as a shield. After all, that is the usual thing. Maybe you aren't even surprised that Diamond saves the day (and himself) by shooting from between his knees to help rid himself of the menacing killer. After all, you knew that Diamond had a gun.

What does surprise you and keep your interest from the very start to this flashy finish is the smoothness and the

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The Maxwell family has always been an average, down to earth family. No airs, no pretensions, just ordinary people like their neighbors. In fact, that's the life for Papa, Mama, thirteen year old Wilbur, and seventeen year old Connie. But it's different with fifteen year old Betty Lou. She's always loved big affairs, important people, and has long aspired to be a debutante. So, she made friends with ultra-ultra Suzanne Coady, daughter of THE R. Hamilton Coady, one of the city's really important men. Well, Suzanne asks Betty Lou to go to the mountains with her for the summer and after much pleading and wailing, the parents finally give in. When Betty Lou returns home weeks later, she's a much changed young lady. She not only brings back a very different Betty Lou, but a big idea of Mr. Coady's — he'll make Papa Maxwell a state representative. Mr. Coady tells Mr. Maxwell that he can put him in office just like that — that it's money in the bank . . .

honey in the hive. Mr. Maxwell immediately visions himself the future president of the United States. He starts campaigning like mad and the whole family's hobnobbing with the town's elite, much to the chagrin of son Wilbur who's irked by baths, manners, combs, and Arthur — the Coady's young son. Well, the Maxwells don't have time for their neighbors anymore, they're too busy. Finally comes the third act and the big election. The whole family is sitting around the radio, listening to the election returns. It finally dawns on them that Papa is losing the election and losing it badly. The Coadys then disown them, and Mr. Maxwell, friendless and humiliated informs the family they're moving to another town. The neighbors then start returning their borrowed goods, and it's over this stack of boxes, umbrellas, fishing tackle and everything else that the Maxwells realize that the real honey in everyones hive is his friends just like these—and they move back in.

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speed with which events occur, the building interest you feel as the story goes on. And the more you hear, the more you want to hear.

It is not possible to do justice to a story or a series in a synopsis because only the skeleton is provided. Any piece of literary material is equally dependent on the flesh covering that skeleton, the manner in which the author works. In drama there is the added factor of acting. In this case the author is excellent and the acting measures up to the writing.

It is interesting to note that all of Diamond's work is done inside the law, most often with the aid of the police department. For purposes of humor and interest there is never any extralegal activity. That sort of moral correctness helps make the detective's character more admirable. In the course of every play, you meet Police Lieutenant Walter Levinson (played by Ed Begley) who got his start on the force at the same time as Diamond, and Police Sergeant Otis, the not-so-smart cop whom Diamond uses as the butt of much of his sarcastic humor.

After the case at hand is ended, Diamond is found for the closing scene of the program in the Park Avenue apartment of his sweetheart Helen (played by Virginia Gregg). This closing scene dispels the aura of mystery, suspense, and excitement with which the listener may be left, by having Powell sing a romantic song to his girl friend. This short scene provides re-

laxation after suspense, and gives Powell a chance to demonstrate the voice that made him famous as the movie crooner.

Richard Diamond, Private Detective is vibrant with life. The participants are alert and add to a moving script the polish of adept actors. After all, a person reading his lines incorrectly in the best play can very quickly ruin his author, making flat the intended high points, stressing unimportant lines. A very interesting example of this can be seen if you take a normal sentence and keep repeating it, each time putting the stress on a different word.

Fortunately, the author of the "Richard Diamond" series does not have to worry about his actors; nor does he have to worry about his material. Everything flows smoothly, giving movement and breath to comparatively simple stories. It is the freshness and vivacity of this program that makes it so successful. The flippant remarks, the rapid-fire dialogue combine to make a graceful package, easy on the ears and mind.

Here we could get into an unsettled age-old discussion on the purpose of literature. (And please do not forget that radio is one of the many forms of literature.) The problem is one of whether literature is meant to instruct or to entertain.

Certainly, "Richard Diamond" does not instruct; at least not in any practical way. But the show entertains. So you

see that it does fulfill one of the requirements of writing. Remember that the usual big-scale radio stanza is only a half hour long. That isn't any more than a "short short" story. Radio puts into operation again and again the philosophy of Edgar Allen Poe that the short story must be shorn of all its unnecessary frills, that it must get right down to the matter at hand and say what it has to say, make the picture it wants to make.

In the written story there is a censor in the form of the editor. If he doesn't like what you say or the way you say it, your material never goes before the reader. In radio, however, the censor is time. Radio time is expensive and radio writers are well aware of this fact. Whether the show is sponsored or sustaining, and the Diamond show is of the latter type — the writer is on his toes for the full time he is "On the Air." He can't afford to waste something so small as seconds. Did it ever occur to you that program exactness is the result of a great deal of work and planning? A show running thirty minutes has been rehearsed any number of times so that it fits perfectly into the space allotted to it. Otherwise it sounds like a slipshod, butchered piece of shoddy material.

Richard Diamond, Private Detective is written by Blake Edwards, a newcomer to the field. To the author and the director undoubtedly go praises for excellent dialogue and even, quick timing that make the program listenable, enjoyable, and pleasingly entertaining.

THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Northeastern State College,
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

STAGING ALICE-SIT-BY-THE-FIRE

By GLADYS A. PETERSON*

(As produced by the Maclean Players in Chicago, under the direction of Dr. M. Catherine Lyons)

ALICE-SIT-BY-THE-FIRE, a comedy in three acts by James Barrie. Six women, three men. Costumes about 1919. Royalty, \$37.50. Books, Chas. Scribners Sons, Times Square, New York City.

Suitability

This play is a paradox. It is difficult and it is easy, but under good direction it can be successfully staged. Not one line can or should be cut. The play is "chock full" of whimsy, purely Barriesque. Not an offensive line or situation in the entire play.

Plot

Colonel Grey and wife Alice are returning from India. Their two older children, Amy, 17, and Cosmo, 13, are very uncomfortable, as they imagine their parents must be very changed by now.

The parents find the children very cool to Alice because of her youth and gayety. Amy and the baby like the father, however. Steve, an old friend, calls. He is not acquainted with Amy. When he and Alice are left alone, Alice wishes Steve to agree that the Colonel is a brute to steal her children's love. Steve complies, and gives Alice a friendly peck on the cheek.

Amy and Ginevra, hidden behind a screen, think this is an "affair." Amy decides to go to Steve's rooms, try to fascinate him, so taking him away from her mother. If this fails, then threats!

In Act II, Amy is found in a cupboard in the dazed Steve's rooms, but Alice contrives to make the Colonel think she just came in at the door, but Amy innocently picks up her glove which the Colonel had found and draws it on. Alice manages to get the Colonel and Steve to leave and she also extricates the truth from Amy. Alice decides to humor Amy into thinking she has saved her home from wreck-age.

Act III finds Alice promising to tell the Colonel all about the imagined affair with Steve. Ginevra is regaled with a melodramatic recital of all that happened in Steve's rooms. When Steve unexpectedly arrives, Amy tells him she need not marry him now, as her father knows all. Ginevra decides that she will take Steve. The unhappy man is saved by the arrival of Col. and Mrs. Grey. Ginevra and Amy leave, and Steve is then informed of Amy's ludicrous mistake. His embarrassment is eased as he is going, by the Grey's telling him to drop around any time he is lonely.

Amy returns. Her father seeing her, cries to Alice, "Go! Go! Go!" But Amy demands, "What will happen to me if mother goes?" She draws them together until their hands meet and the curtain falls.

Casting

The girl who plays Alice must have charm and subtlety. She must feel as many emotions as there are facets on a finely cut diamond, and be able to flash the color they give off just as rapidly.

The Colonel, by a man who can imagine the feelings of a middle-aged man who is very capable, very broad-minded, knows he can trust his wife implicitly, has a fine sense of humor, understands women perfectly but does not always seem to be able to cope with a situation as quickly as the woman can.

The director should be very careful in casting the parts of Amy and Ginevra. It is very easy to overact them and throw them into the burlesque where they certainly do not belong. The actresses of these roles must have sensitivity, and so avoid clowning.

Cosmo offers opportunity for some brilliant freshman. He is very similar to the juvenile in *The Winslow Boy*, which some of our readers have seen.

Stephen, the friend of the family, is very normal, but somehow he just has never "caught on" to the technique of being a ladies' man. There is fine opportunity for whimsical pantomime in this role, but the actor must not overdo it.

Richardson, Steve's slavey, is about fifteen. She should be played not too slowly but eagerly wistful, especially at the sight of food.

While Fanny and the Nurse are minor characters, like all of Barrie's, they are important. They speak with a cockney accent, are very vital and when well played, they leave their impression on the audience.

Each character in this play affords unlimited opportunity for both the director and the actor, and we should add, for each individual in the audience.

Directing

The director must be aware of the fact that there are a number in the audience who do not comprehend the

Dr. M. Catharine Lyons is the director of the Maclean Studios in the Fine Arts Building in Chicago. Her Maclean Players have an enviable reputation for excellent productions.

Miss Peterson teaches in the Logan Public School of Chicago and is a graduate of the Chicago Teacher's College. She has had special training in the Chicago Musical College and has studied voice and dramatic art at the Maclean Studios. She prepares programs for Book Week in the public school assemblies in Chicago and plays with the Maclean Players.

whimsy of Barrie. The director must, therefore, understand every line and every situation thoroughly and have his cast so highlight every line by correct emphasis and color that the lines will not be overdone, but the meaning made very evident.

The most difficult scene in the whole play is at the beginning in the dialogue between Amy and Ginevra. This scene can be very monotonous and tedious to a dull audience unless it is played perfectly. Do not permit this scene to drag. It must be kept at a fast tempo, with much variety in the speed.

The play will take up much more of the Barrie atmosphere if the director will see to it that each character speaks not only with soft a's and r's, but that he has the typically English cadences; or if it is a cockney speaking, that the cockney does more than merely substitute long i's for all the long a's, but that she, too, gets the peculiar cockney movement of the phrases and therefore the entire sentence. This problem of the English and the Cockney accents is not too difficult for the actors if the director thoroughly understands accent and dialect.

It might be well, in order to help an audience appreciate such plays as Barrie's, to give a hint on the program opposite each character's name, as to the outstanding quality of this character. Below is what appeared on the program of THE MACLEAN PLAYERS in their Chicago production.

Amy, eldest child of Col. and Mrs. Grey
..... Allison Kendall
Cosmo, the very young, but very grown-up son of the Grey's Richard Voell
Ginevra, a friend of Amy's, but like Amy, very melodramatic Dorothy Diercks
Nurse, who has a mind of her own
..... Martha Vale
Alice, will she ever grow up?
..... Torina Pisano
Fanny, a perfect servant Patricia Howell
The Colonel, the most indulgent of husbands
..... Carl De Biase
Steve, a "very good young man"
..... Franklyn Burke
Richardson, the hungry English servant
..... Lorraine Yaap
Time - About 1919.
Place - Unquestionably, England

Rehearsals

Some in our cast had previous experience with our director and did not need as much help as less experienced ones. About sixty hours were given to rehearsals which included the dress rehearsal.

Staging

The sets, two in number, are easy. Book gives minute description of set and furnishings in Acts I and III, but is very sketchy on Act II. All that is needed in Act II is a shabby sofa, cupboard, small table where two can eat, two chairs at table, and two easy chairs.

We used curtains with door, fireplace and window insets.

RIP VAN WINKLE

dramatized from the popular Washington Irving Story • by Grace Ruthenburg

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This play is valuable for historic reasons, portraying vividly the flow of life in the early American colonies.

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Act II. Old Sofa, Curtains to simulate window, Cupboard, Fireplace, Chair, Chairs and Table, Armchair, Doors.

Lighting

Very simple:

Act I — Lighted fireplace of amber and red. Amber flood. Tops, red, amber.

Act II — Effect of poor lighting. A few tops of blue, amber, used.

Act III — All tops on in amber, white, a few reds.

Costuming

For city dwellers this play furnishes a costume problem, as the time of the play is around 1919. Costumers carry no costumes for the women of this period as it is not far enough removed from the present to be called a period. In a small city or village, however, no doubt costumes of 1919 are stored in old trunks in the attic.

As our actors were all busy people, we decided to costume the play modern, but simple, and the director with her magic art, created, through the actors, such a quaint and terrific atmosphere, the audience thought it was back in 1919. This was really an achievement. We *did* use the suggested uniform for Cosmo.

Make-up

In Little Theatre work, we find dry make-up instead of grease paint much

more satisfactory, especially where the audience is so near that the most finished grease make-up is too evident. Many of our well known professional actors have abandoned grease, except for chorus or eccentrics, as the dry make-up affords greater mobility of facial expression. The make-up is easy as there are no "character" make-ups. As most

high school and colleges play in large auditoriums, they may prefer grease and forfeit the finer shades of facial expression.

Budget

Our budget would be of little value to readers of DRAMATICS, because we rent scenery, costumes and props when necessary. Our expenses consist of rent for theatre, printing, postage, inserts for cyclorama or curtains, cartage, etc. Newspaper publicity is gratis. Many readers of this magazine can produce this play for much less than we did. Our total cost was \$265.83.

Publicity

Chicago's loop newspapers gave us good announcements on the professional theatre pages. Neighborhood weeklies wrote up the play and the actors of their particular neighborhood. Posters, handmade, were placed in the lobby of The Fine Arts Building.

Results

Our audience responded to many of the bits of subtle humor in the play although it lost some of the finer whimsy. This play is typically Barriesque, and if you like that you will love A.S.B.T.F.

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HANDBOOK FOR CHILDREN'S THEATRE DIRECTORS

This handbook has been prepared with the cooperation of the Association of Junior Leagues of America and the Children's Theatre Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association. Edited by Louise C. Horton. Contains the following articles: "Children's Theatre, an Introduction" by Louise C. Horton; "Organizational Problems in Children's Theatre" by Virginia Lee Comet; "Purposes of Children's Theatre Plays" by Kenneth L. Graham; "Choosing the Children's Theatre Play" by Burdette Fitzgerald; "Directing the Children's Theatre Play" by William Ireland Duncan; "Rehearsal Techniques" by Charlotte B. Chorpennig; "The Children's Theatre Audience" by Albert O. Mitchell. Also contains a list of recommended full-length children's plays.

Price, 60 Cents

THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY
College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, O.

December Issue: HAY FEVER

THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,
Los Angeles, California

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1949-50 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

The Adventures of ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD

IN a display of his canny entertainment sense, Walt Disney combines his own animation art and Bing Crosby's singing to place his new all-cartoon feature, *The Adventures of ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD*, among his top-level pictures. The escapades of those two immortals of legend set a new pace in rollicking comedy and action, even by the Disney standard of screen fare. RKO Radio Pictures is releasing this new feature.

Ichabod is the Yankee itinerant schoolmaster delightfully lampooned in Washington Irving's *LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW*, familiar to every American boy and girl from that day to this. Mr. Toad is the thrill-mad little riverside fellow in Kenneth Grahame's British fantasy, *WIND IN THE WILLOWS*. Their respective characters and capers have excited all of the Disney magic. He wraps them in laughter and music and pulls out all the stops of entertainment to make them and their cronies irresistible.

Bing Crosby, not seen on the screen, exerts to the full the vocal personality by which he is known to the majority of his admirers. He narrates and chants the ludicrous fame of Irving's country gallant who aspires to the hand of the community's richest farmer's daughter against the rivalry of Brom Bones. Basil Rathbone performs a similar service for the gallivanting Mr. Toad, his clipped British inflections aptly relating the misadventures of the master of Toad Hall. In addition to these off-stage commentators, each character of importance has his own voice, as, for the Toad, Eric Blower's. Crosby and Rathbone tie the two tales together with an amusing debate about fascinating scapegraces of literature. The two heroes of the picture are their respective candidates.

Much of the picture's charm comes from the musical score. Crosby sings three songs: "Ichabod," a travesty on the pedagogue's mannerisms; "Katrina," a romantic ditty about the belle of Sleepy Hollow; and "The Headless Horseman," a creepy rhythm song set to the teacher's terror as he flees headlong during the famous goblin hoax. MR. TOAD, too, has tuneful complement in the "Merrily Song," to which the thrill-chaser and his raffish horse careen through the English countryside on their way to Nowhere-In-Particular.

The Disney Touch

By the nature of its material, *Ichabod and Mr. Toad* sets up an appeal to adults and youth without neglecting the small fry in its assorted excitements.

The personalized animals of the *Wind in the Willows* community have wit and sharp human parallels. The wry love story in *Ichabod*—the burlesque courtship that is finally overwhelmed by superstitious terror—is delightful travesty for elders and at the same time has laughs for the entire family. Disney has the knack of making his love stories delightful to grown-ups, at the same time giving them the comical exaggeration that youngsters require to hide embarrassment. In *Bambi* the wilderness courtship of the deer was sentimentally but honestly told. In *Fun and Fancy Free* the Bongo-Lulubelle affair was fine travesty. In the case of the over-confident Ichabod Crane, the competition with Brom Bones for Katrina is artistically caricatured.

The "chase" is a favorite Disney film ingredient. The two chases in *ICHABOD AND MR. TOAD* have rarely been matched for visual excitement and laughter in any medium, especially the tumult and suspense of the "Headless Horseman" pursuit. This final frantic phase of the legend is one of the classic spoofings of superstitions having to do with ghosts and apparitions. A kin to it is the chase in the MR. TOAD episode. This depicts the escape of J. Thaddeus Toad, the baron of Toad Hall, from jail after his arrest for possession of a stolen automobile. Toad is guilty only of having traded his magnificent manse, unwittingly, for a "hot" car, but the duplicity of a witness lands him in the pokey. It requires all the ingenuity and daring of his friends to set him free. The chase proceeds by foot, hampered with ball-and-chain, by train and boat, and finally by sheer wit and nimbleness through the halls of his ancestral castle before the Weasel Gang and their leader are overcome and the purloined deed to the estate recovered.

British Story Teller

Washington Irving's waggish legend about the Yankee pedagogue who taught a mixed school in the Hudson River valley settlement first appeared in *The Sketch Book* 149 years ago. It has never lost relish since that day when the tale of Ichabod was companion to the other immortal Irving fable, *Rip Van Winkle*. When Kenneth Grahame, British prose poet, wrote his *Wind in the Willows* forty-one years ago for an only son of ten, he also wrote a fantasy for the youth of the world. Grahame wrote for fun. Writing always was secondary to his job and his personal life, but he had the inspired tale-teller's gift. His daily work was that of secretary of the Bank of England. He also served in

the London Scottish Regiment and forgot his native shyness in social work among the slum dwellers of Toynbee Hall. For all this, his literary output was considerable and quickly ranked him among England's ablest story-tellers.

Kenneth Grahame felt a peculiar kinship with the creatures of wood and field, as *WIND IN THE WILLOWS* so eloquently reveals. He was never really at home beneath a roof, but expanded under the open sky. Although ostensibly written for youngsters, Grahame's books are read widely by adults who wistfully remember their early youth and recall how imagination peopled it. In London he was reputed to have known the name and the "personality" of every animal in the neighborhood. His fables have a sense of reality because his animals are real animals in the midst of fantasy, and his whimsy never becomes mawkish. Of his own attitude, Grahame said he wrote for children, because "they are the only really living people."

The Tale of Ichabod

The familiar Irving story tells how Ichabod Crane becomes the laughing stock of a little Hudson River Village where he works his way into the social life of the community through favoritism to certain young scholars and courtly manner to the ladies. He concentrates his attention upon the fair Katrina van Tassel, daughter of a rich Dutch farmer. Brom Bones, the bully of the region, moves in to check the ardent courtship, with Katrina enjoying the rivalry—preferring Brom, but shamelessly encouraging the smitten pedagogue.

At the height of Ichabod's wooing, he attends a feast at Katrina's home in Sleepy Hollow. Brom Bones realizes he must take drastic measures. After the dining and drinking, the talk turns to local legends and superstitions. Suddenly, watching Ichabod, Brom realizes that the schoolteacher is terrified at the thought of ghosts and goblins. That's the cue for the most celebrated hoax in all comedy literature. Brom recites the legend of the "Headless Horseman" who rides the Sleepy Hollow glens seeking a new top-piece for his lost cranium. The party breaks up. Astride his scarecrow plow horse, the schoolmaster departs for his lodgings.

His scalp creeps as he rides into the forest path. True to his worst fears, he hears demoniacal laughter and beholds the apparition of the headless thing galloping fast behind him. The chase begins and the who's forest takes on the gibbering terror. Just when it seems that the fugitive must swoon from sheer fright, his thundering steed carries him across the covered bridge beyond which the headless pursuer is powerless. The next day schoolboys find his hat and the remains of a smashed pumpkin, with holes for mouth and eyes. But Ichabod is not seen again.

The Tale of Mr. Toad

In the riverside cove of *Wind in the Willows*, Mr. J. Thaddeus Toad, wealthy sportsman and seeker of perpetual excitement, is the big toad of his small puddle. His staunch friends, MacBadger, Water Rat, and Mole, are con-

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The National Thespian Society
College Hill Station Cincinnati 24, Ohio

cerned about reports of his newest venture in thrills in a Gypsy cart with his horse companion, Cyril. Toad's creditors are at the mansion door demanding payment of past extravagances. But, when his three friends remonstrate with him and try to lure him home, he defies them and roars gaily away on his merry way to Nowhere-In-Particular.

A sporty red motor car roars past Toad and takes his fancy. In a reckless deal with a gang of Weasels at a roadhouse, Toad trades his great manor hall for the auto. It is a stolen car, possession of which quickly lands him in jail, after a trial in which he is betrayed by the innkeeper upon whom he has relied for his claim of innocent possession.

Through a ruse by his faithful horse, Toad escapes jail. Still encumbered with ball and chain, he flees through city and countryside, one jump ahead of the animal counterpart of Scotland Yard; outrunning his pursuers on an engine; leaping into a pond where he almost drowns; taking refuge, finally, at the home of Walter Rat where his other friends have gathered. MacBadger has discovered that the Weasel Gang who sold him the car are celebrating their deal in Toad Hall, now claimed by Winkey, the innkeeper, and the Weasels as their own.

The good friends of Toad help him to recover the deed to his property and to exonerate him. But victory over the gangsters doesn't cure Mr. Toad of his mania for thrills. On the contrary, it seems but to fan his urge for travel and change, for at the end of the story he is seen and heard by his start'ed pals zooming above the great hall and knocking off its steeples in one of the early model planes. Off he goes again, Cyril the horse seated beside him, with a "Tallyho!" and a "Yoics!"

CALENDER OF EVENTS

November 5. Drama Clinic in Speech Activities, sponsored by the Department of Speech, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La. C. L. Shaver, director.

November 5. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by the Pasadena Playhouse, Pasadena, Cal. Charles F. Prickett, general manager.

November 12. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by the Department of Speech, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla. Delwin B. Dusenbury, director.

November 12. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by the Speech and Dramatic Art Department, Westminster College, New Wilmington, Pa. Donald L. Barbe, director.

November 19. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by the Ohio State University Theatre, Columbus, Ohio. John H. McDowell, director.

December 3. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by the Department of English, Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va. Charles Trumbo, director.

December 3. Drama Clinic for Secondary Schools, sponsored by the School of Speech, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. G. Harry Wright, director.

December 3, 4. Drama Conference and Clinic, sponsored by the Dramatic Center, University of Delaware, Newark, Dela. C. R. Kase, director.

December 28, 29, 30. Annual Convention of the American Educational Theatre Association, Hotel Stevens, Chicago, Ill. Executive Secretary: Wm. P. Halstead, Department of Speech, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.

December 28, 29, 30. Annual Convention of the Speech Association of America, Hotel Stevens, Chicago, Ill. Executive Secretary: Loren Reid, Department of Speech, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

Tailored Music

Disney's explorations have followed musical lines as well as visual. He has never better coordinated the score and the action than in the new film. The trio of songs delivered by Crosby depict character and situation and comic predicament as vividly as the scenes of Ichabod's courtship and flight. In theme and melody they have the sound of hit numbers. Well in advance of the picture's release, the three songs have won popularity where they have been aired. Words and music are by Don Raye and Gene de Paul.

The "Merrily Song" is the music of Frank Churchill and Larrey Morey, with lyrics by Morey and Ray Gilbert. It is a bright piece reminiscent of the Gilbert and Sullivan style, and harmonizing the adventurous nature and exploits of Mr. Toad.

Oliver Wallace, veteran of Disney's musical department, wrote the score. Free of profes-

sional music tricks, the score conjures the style and atmosphere of old English pastoral melodies for the MR. TOAD sequences, with the style of early American dance music adapted to the farmhouse festival in ICHABOD. The "Headless Horseman" song is seen by some persons in the trade as a likely holiday fixture for Halloween, which now is without a dedicated song. Orchestras take to it easily.

When he uses Americana for the screen, Disney is a stickler for authenticity. This care applies to music as well as to character and incident of fable, legend and tradition. To get the feel and the sense of tradition for the Sleepy Hollow episode, Disney visited the Tarrytown region on the Hudson and cued his animation artists accordingly. Similarly, he made sure through research that the songs, the instruments and the whole musical atmosphere for *Ichabod* were in accord with colonial fact. Music lovers will get an extra pleasure out of this valid orchestration.



Scene from the new Walt Disney film, *Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, in Technicolor. (Photograph courtesy Walt Disney Productions).

On The High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with
The National Thespian Society

THESPIAN HONOR ROLL

We regret that lack of space has prevented us from publishing in this issue the "Thespian Honor Roll" to which reference was made in our October number. However, we will definitely publish the Roll in the December issue. — EDITOR

Point Pleasant, W. Va.

PPOINT PLEASANT High School (Thespian Troupe 88): *Bachelor's Wife, Too Sweet for Sixteen, Double Door, Grapes for Dinner, The Moon Keeps Shining, The Lost Kiss, Music Hath Charms, Moonshine*. Presented plays for Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Mason County Teachers Association. Gave orations and readings for community groups. Thespian members attended performance of *Hamlet*. Thespian membership granted to forty-two students, with Mrs. Elsie S. Rardin as sponsor. — Judy Romine, Secretary

Pella, Iowa

PELLA High School (Thespian Troupe 123): *Home Sweet Homicide, Papa Is All, Happy Journey, Two Crooks and a Lady, Winter Sunset, Cemetery Moon, Whirligig of Life*. Participated in district drama contest (rated second). Monthly club meetings devoted to study of make-up and care of stage and sets. Twenty-eight students given Thespian membership, with Mrs. Vera Van De Voort as sponsor. — Dolores Swank, Secretary

San Pedro, Calif.

SAN PEDRO High School (Thespian Troupe 435): *The Ghost Train, Arsenic and Old Lace, Showboat, Sleeping Beauty, Through the Key Hole*. Placed second in Shakespearean Festival at Occidental College. Twenty-four students granted Thespian membership, with Robert L. Rivera, troupe sponsor. — Janet Cheesman, Secretary

Medina, Ohio

MEDINA High School (Thespian Troupe 441): *Blithe Spirit, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, One Foot in Heaven, Curse You, Jack Dalton, Tom Sawyer*, Christmas pageant. Made trips to see productions by other high schools. Thespian membership awarded to eight students, with Wallace Smith as troupe sponsor. — Nancy Burris, Secretary

Barrackville, W. Va.

BARRACKVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 450): *The Arrival of Kitty, A Ready Made Family, Mama's Little Helper*. Participated in regional play contest, members making the all Regional Play Cast. Present a bi-weekly radio program, News of the Week,

over Station WVWV. Thirteen students admitted to membership, with Lewis W. Hall as sponsor. — Herbert Hall, Secretary

Parma, Ohio

PARMA SCHAAF High School (Thespian Troupe 461): *Meet a Body, The Divine Flora*. Thespian membership given to twenty-nine students, with Jenny Lind Givens as sponsor. — Doretta Maag, Secretary

Pendleton, Oregon

PENDLETON High School (Thespian Troupe 466): *Tish, Every Family Has One, Billy's First Date*, Christmas pantomime. Presented one-act play for local clubs and hospital. Thirty-two students granted Thespian membership, with Myrtle Thompson as troupe sponsor. — Marlene Lieuallen, Secretary

Sunnyside, Wash.

SUNNYSIDE High School (Thespian Troupe 492): *Home Sweet Homicide, The Baby Sitter, Dad Takes a Rest Cure, Murder in the Family, I Shall Be Waiting, Soap Opera, Miracle at Blaise, Just What They Wanted*. Nineteen students awarded Thespian membership, with Marion Hankwitz as sponsor. — Lee Elwell, Secretary

Minerva, Ohio

MINERVA High School (Thespian Troupe 497): *A Young Man's Fancy, Best Years, Don't Open 'til Christmas, May Day pageant*. Presented radio program, *Hound of the Cat-skills*. Thespian membership granted to nineteen students, Franklin E. Arndt, Jr., troupe sponsor. — Martha Hawkins, Secretary

Baton Rouge, La.

BATON ROUGE Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 504): *Meet Me in St. Louis, Sugar 'n Spice, The Farmer's Daughter, On the Air, A Date With Bobby-Sox, Candy Goes on a Diet, The Florist's Shop, There Was One Who Gave a Lamb, Louisiana Jamboree*, talent show. Entry in American Legion Speech contest. Presented program for American Education Week over Station WAFB. Thespian membership given to eleven students. Alma Belle Womack, troupe sponsor. — Sara Latham, Secretary

Evanston, Wyo.

EVANSTON High School (Thespian Troupe 514): *Nine Girls, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Trifles*, a Christmas pageant. Received a superior rating in the State Speech Festival. Presented a radio reading of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Members were guests at the local dramatics club banquet. Twenty-one students granted Thespian membership, with John F. Welsh, sponsor. — Bob Pinney, Secretary

Nappance, Indiana

NAPPANCE Community High School (Thespian Troupe 515): *Old Doc, Stranger in the Night, A Song Is Born*. Attended two professional productions of Shakespearean plays. Meetings devoted to the study of make-up and costuming. Thespian membership granted to fifteen students, with Mrs. Edith Pelchrim as sponsor. — Marietta Melinger, Secretary

San Jose, Calif.

SAN JOSE High School (Thespian Troupe 537): *Divine Flora, Romeo and Juliet, The Man Who Came to Dinner, Box and Cox, Now Is the Time, Trial by Moonlight, Centennial Capers*, a Christmas pageant. Two weekly radio programs presented over Stations KSJO and KEEN, with a special production during Drama Week. A visit to San Francisco Art Museum was made to study details for costuming. Attended Maurice Evan's presentation of *Man and Superman*. Seventeen students given Thespian membership, with Mary Alice Hamm as sponsor. — Helen Miller, Secretary

Buechel, Kentucky

FERN CREEK High School (Thespian Troupe 547): *The House Nobody Lived In, Georgie Porgie, Youth and Consequences, Kentucky Sue*. Gave six radio programs over Station WGRC. Members attended a presentation of *Rip Van Winkle* in Louisville. Won first place in one-act play contest sponsored by Jefferson County Recreation Board. Thespian membership granted to eleven students. Helen Scott, troupe sponsor. — Ellen Harris, Secretary



Scene from the production of *Charley's Aunt* as given at the Bloomington, Illinois, High school (Thespian Troupe 131). Directed by Dorothy Hostettler, Rhilda Betts, troupe sponsor.

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Produced in New York with Leo G. Carroll in the principal male role, early in 1949. An entertaining play of universal appeal. **4 men, 10 women and girls;** 1 interior setting. Books, **85c.** Fee, **\$50-\$25.** **The Story.** A charming young girl comes to live in the household of an elderly priest. She has been brought there by her aunt, scheming but faithful housekeeper at the establishment. Jenny, 18, is the precise opposite of the kind of smart sophisticated young miss that puzzles and exasperates Father Moynihan. The plot is concerned with the priest's clumsy but sympathetic endeavors to make Jenny attractive to the boys. Studying feminine magazines and getting pointers on feminine psychology and new fashions, he is so successful that he nearly overplays his hand. A romance runs through the play which ends in the engagement of Jenny

to an attractive, somewhat older man, who, trying hard to be fair and give Jenny a chance to meet eligible youngsters, almost risks losing the girl he really cares for. But it turns out that this man has been Jenny's choice from the very first. Her consenting to go out with an amusing but somewhat over-enthusiastic follower of jive, has been in the line of duty, and the young man's amusing antics end up by boring her. The whole play is made doubly attractive and amusing by the presence of several young girls and the young boy above mentioned, all of whom somehow manage to make Jenny "hep." Or, rather, so they think, since Jenny remains to the end a very lovely, simple and attractive girl, and her union with the man she loves is a proper solution to all the plots and plans of the various characters.

*

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A FEW OTHER PLAYS WHICH ARE AT PRESENT RELEASED TO A GREAT EXTENT ALL OVER THE COUNTRY

(Regulations governing release and restrictions of the plays vary greatly and are subject to unpredictable modification. Therefore, all producing groups are urged to write well in advance whenever they plan to use any play advertised by the Service.)

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Scene from **Our Hearts Were Young and Gay** given as the senior class play at the Pueblo, Colorado, Catholic High School (Thespian Troupe 606), with Sister Mary Consolata as director.

Eagle Grove, Iowa

EAGLE GROVE High School (Thespian Troupe 543): *The Family Upstairs, Little Women, Antic Spring*. Participated in Conference Play Festival. Thespian membership awarded to sixteen students, with Omar A. Lett as sponsor.—*Dale Midland, Secretary*

Vincennes, Indiana

LINCOLN High School (Thespian Troupe 548): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, January Thaw, Lawyer Lincoln*. Presented a one-act play at a Little Theatre meeting. Ten students given Thespian membership, with Elwood Miller as sponsor.—*Patricia Gillespie, Secretary*

Lima, Ohio

LIMA Central High School (Thespian Troupe 553): *The Divine Flora, Cuckoos on the Hearth, We Shook the Family Tree, One Foot in Heaven, Which Is the Way to Boston?, Stoney's Brides, Down in the Heart of Texas, Mrs. O'Leary's Cow, Jerry Breaks a Date*. Participated in the City High School Drama Clinic. Presented a program over Station WLOK. Nineteen students granted Thespian membership, with A. Ruth Moore, sponsor.—*Beverly Stover, Secretary*

Bristol, Va.

VIRGINIA Intermont College-High School Department (Thespian Troupe 555): *When Shakespeare's Ladies Meet, The Sweetmeat Game, Privately Printed, Shubert Alley, Nobody Sleeps, Nine Girls, Oh Father!, All Doubled Up, The Weird Sisters, Paris Sets the Style, The Powers That Be*. Four students received Thespian membership. Wm. Ellis Jones, troupe sponsor.

Coachella, Calif.

COACHELLA VALLEY Union High School (Thespian Troupe 562): *A Date With Judy*,

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THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY
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Berkeley Square, Sunday Costs Five Pesos, The Dabblers, Sure as You're Born, Bob Goes Dramatic. A Christmas pageant was presented under the joint sponsorship of the Music and Speech Departments. Thespian members offered a fifteen minute version of *Little Red Riding Hood* over Station KREO during Drama Week. Thespian membership given thirty-three students, with Elaine Buttrud as sponsor.—*Mary Pollard, Secretary*

Zanesville, Ohio

LASH High School (Thespian Troupe 563): *The Night of January 16, Dear Ruth, Arsenic and Old Lace, Last Flight Over, Happy Journey, A Night in Old Vienna*. Awarded third place for the one-act play presented in the Ohio High School Speech League contest. Two radio programs given over Station WHIZ. A number of students attended a play produced at Denison University. Thespian membership granted to fifty students, with Mrs. Ruth R. Denney as sponsor.—*Ellen Jean Carpenter, Secretary*

Minneapolis, Minn.

ACADEMY OF THE HOLY ANGELS High School (Thespian Troupe 568): *The*

Girl With Two Faces, Beware Murder, Scenes from Shakespeare, Connecticut Yankee, Alice in Wonderland, Murder in a Nunnery, The Vision at the Inn, Holy Night, At the Feet of the Madonna, The Pied Piper, Alice in Wonderland presented for the Children's Theatre. An excellent rating received at North Central Region of C.I.C. Festival. Twenty-three students awarded Thespian membership, with Sister M. Charitas as troupe sponsor.—*Jeanne McGee, Secretary*

Pasadena, Texas

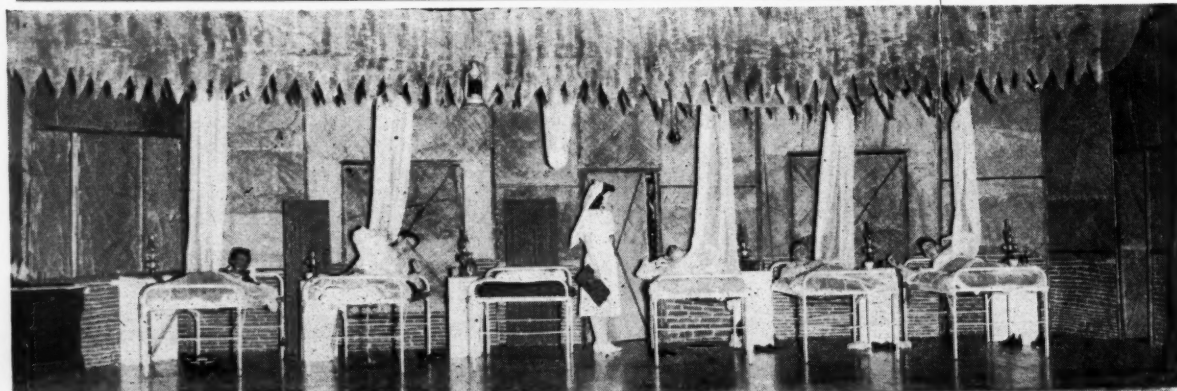
PASADENA High School (Thespian Troupe 579): *The Ghost in the House, Night of January 16, Spring Fever, Star in the Window, Music Hath Charms, The Moon Keeps Shining, Summons of Sarel, Dust of the Road, Youth Adds a Dash of Pepper*, variety show, senior review. Weekly radio program presented. Awarded third place in state one-act play contest. Twenty-three students received Thespian membership. Mrs. Florence S. Horton, troupe sponsor.—*Ernestine Houston, Secretary*

South Euclid, Ohio

CHARLES F. BRUSH High School (Thespian Troupe 583): *The Divine Flora, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, A Date With Judy, Papa Is All, The Ghost Wore White, Sky Fodder*, a musical revue. Dramatics club meetings given to survey of plays selected by high schools throughout the country. Two broadcasts presented over Station WSR. Thespian membership given to nineteen students, with A. L. Kingzett as sponsor.—*Barbara Yeager, Secretary*

Pullman, Wash.

PULLMAN High School (Thespian Troupe 592): *The Thirteenth Chair, The Whole Town's Talking*, Junior Revue of 1949. Twenty-five students awarded Thespian membership, with Mrs. Martha M. Knight, as sponsor.



This is a scene from a production of **The Heart** given at the Helena, Montana, High School (Thespian Troupe 745). Directed by Doris Marsolias Marshall.

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A New, Modern Comedy by
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10 M. 10 W. (nine of the number having relatively light assignments). One simple interior. Modern costumes. Books, 85c. Royalty, \$1-\$25 on percentage plan; or a flat rate will be quoted for two or more performances.

YOU don't have to borrow a baby for **CRADLE TROUBADOUR**, but, judging by the ticket-selling "pull" of cunning, little Eileen Watson (cast as Dennis Lakewood Markley) in the Munhall, Pennsylvania production (see picture at right), it will pay you to do so. Eileen and Joe McClosky's "bloodhound" almost stole the show.

If you're a bit jaded with adolescent plays, here's a feast for you. It's a domestic comedy, to be sure — but what a difference! Read it and see for yourself. If you are not pleased with **CRADLE TROUBADOUR**, we shall refund the purchase price without a murmur—and promptly.



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Family Tree, Sure as You're Born, Christmas pageant. Received trophy for the best play in County League division of Ohio State contest. Meetings devoted to discussion of make-up, techniques, lighting, student directing and critiques of productions. Thespian membership given to nine students, with Mrs. Lois E. Ludwig as sponsor.—Margaret E. Kerecz, Secretary

Anchorage, Kentucky

ANCHORAGE High School Thespian Troupe 582: *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, She Married Well, Coming 'Round the Mountain, Jerry Breaks a Date.* Monthly radio program sponsored over Station WGRC. Eight students granted Thespian membership under the direction of Clark Atkins, troupe sponsor.—Sue Ransom, Secretary

Muskegon, Michigan

MUSKEGON Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 704): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Night of January 16, Joint Owners in Spain, The Romancers, A Night at an Inn, The Stolen Prince, Why the Chimes Rang.* Several series of programs presented over local radio stations. Twenty-five students given Thespian membership, with Helen Harton as sponsor.—Charlotte Baldwin, Secretary

Lebanon, Indiana

LEBANON Jr.-Sr. High School (Thespian Troupe 714): *Our Town, Bundles for Christmas, The Valiant, Wampum, The Christmas Guest, The Ides of March, I Know George Washington.* One-act plays presented for local organizations. A number of students attended *Showboat* at the Purdue Music Hall in Lafayette during National Drama Week. Eighteen students granted Thespian membership, with Mrs. Jane Ward, troupe sponsor.—Willie Ann Walton, Secretary

Dearborn, Mich.

DEARBORN High School (Thespian Troupe 586): *George Washington Slept Here, Nine Girls, You Can't Take It With You, Apostrophe in Modern Dress, If Men Played Cards as Women Do. Of Thee I sing* was produced through the joint efforts of the Drama and Music Departments. A number of students attended University of Michigan productions of *Twelfth Night* and *The Heiress*. Nine students granted Thespian membership, with Mrs. William Watson as sponsor.—K. Bennie, Secretary

Lorain, Ohio

LEARVIEW High School (Thespian Troupe 591): *Miss Jimmy, We Shook the*



This episode occurred in a production of *A Ready-Made Family* given by students of the Winchester, Ky., High School (Thespian Troupe 560), with Nancy M. Cawood as director.

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tion reigns at the Maxwells, Mrs. Brown, a negro, and her children, Eddie and Perky, drop in for the Christmas basket promised them. While conversing with Eddie and Perky, Wilbur discovers how happy they are, yet they didn't get a thing for Christmas — nothing but a few nuts. And all they wanted was to be able to play with all the children — children like Wilbur. This makes Wilbur think, and with Perky and Eddie helping, he flies into his packages and the Christmas spirit reigns again. Here's a timely, down to earth Christmas play with laughs, fun, but plenty of logic and common sense. Purchase of 6 copies gives production rights.

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MUGGSY'S MERRY CHRISTMAS

One act Christmas Play. 4 m., 2 w. 6 copies required

By Donald Payton. It's the big day at last in the Maxwell home. Christmas is here. The two children, Wilbur (age thirteen) and Betty Lou (age fifteen) are very anxious to open their presents. But may they? Papa Maxwell says NO! Not until Cousin Arthur gets here. It seems that said cousin has just been released from a hospital and Mr. Maxwell is intent on giving him the merriest Christmas imaginable. Well, while the Maxwells are gone with a basket of food to the Salvation Army, Muggsy and Elmer, a couple of thieves, drop in — very

much intent upon burglarizing the place. While they are pilfering around the room, the Maxwells come home. Elmer manages to hide, but poor Muggsy stumbles over the footstool and falls flat on his face. He is just rising as the Maxwells enter. But do they call the police? No sir! They mistake him for Cousin Arthur and the result is one of the funniest Christmas plays ever seen on any one stage, at any one time. It's a complete three-ring circus of howls and laughter. This play itself is a very Good Christmas present for any community, and it comes beautifully wrapped with chuckles galore. Setting and properties are simple.

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agrees to give it a try. Ginny makes her wish. When Grandma asks what it is, Ginny refuses to tell. By this time the whole family is in on Grandma's plans to make Ginny happy, but how are they ever going to fill that wish when they don't know what it is. Well, the situations that arise from their efforts to fill it are as jolly as Old St. Nick himself! There is an hilarious climax that will leave your audience limp from laughter when "The Wish" is filled by accident, and much to the surprise of the family. It's a play that is easy to produce, with lots of humor, touched here and there with poignant memories. Purchase of 6 copies required.

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WINCHESTER High School (Thespian Troupe 729): *Through the Night*, *Elmer and the Love Bug*, *Wrath of Wrath*, *Pot Luck*, vaudeville show. Participated in the Massachusetts Drama Festival. Several radio programs produced, including a series entitled *Stories to Remember*, and an original dramatic show. Thespian membership given to twenty students with Thomas A. Morse as sponsor.—Beverly Gay, Secretary

Royal Oak Mich.

LITTLE FLOWER High School (Thespian Troupe 734): *Soup to Nuts*, *The King's Jangleur*, *The Littlest Angel*, *Snow-Bound*, *Bobby Sox*, *Jeanie*. Dramatics club meetings devoted to study of the history of the theatre and the do's and don'ts of play production. Thespian membership granted to sixteen students, with Sister Ancilla Marie as sponsor.—Joan Smith, Troupe Secretary

Ness City, Kansas

NESS CITY High School (Thespian Troupe 742): *The Ghost Story*, *He Who Hesitates*, *The Whole Town's Talking*, *Heaven Can Wait*, *Overtones*, *Una Costumbre Vieja Mejicano*. *Hills of Eire* presented at league regional and state festivals. Rated first in regional, second in state. Eleven students awarded Thespian membership, with Charlotte Brickler as sponsor.—Pat Martin, Secretary

Torrington, Wyo.

TORRINGTON High School (Thespian Troupe 757): *Adam's Evening*, *June Mad*, *Balcony Scene*, *Cracked Ice*, *A Young Man's Fancy*, *Pop Reads the Christmas Carol*, *Importance of Being Earnest*. Members of this troupe served on committee of arrangements for their Conference speech festival. A number of students attended the Margaret Webster

production of *Hamlet*. Twenty-three students received Thespian membership. Lloyd S. McKeehan, troupe sponsor.—Thomas Cassidy, Secretary

Biggers, Ark.

BIGGERS-REYNO High School (Thespian Troupe 743): *Feathers in a Gale*, *Miss Ginger*, *The Silver Star of Christmas*, *Free Advice*, *The Dummie*, *Lorna Loon's Fate*. Thespian membership given to ten students, with Wanda Luttrell as sponsor.—Bette L. Halgord, Secretary

Toccoa Falls, Ga.

TOCCOA FALLS High School (Thespian Troupe 761): *The Carpenter*, *While Mor-*

tals Sleep. Assisted College Players in production of *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* and the faculty in the production of *The Beantown Choir*. Monthly radio program, including original plays, for young people and children, broadcast over Station WLET. Nine students granted Thespian membership, with Lorene Moothart as sponsor.—Doris Pain, Secretary

Englewood, Colo.

ENGLEWOOD High School (Thespian Troupe 765): *Macbeth*, *Our Town*, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, *The Doctor Has a Daughter*, *The Other Disciple*. Thirty-one students awarded Thespian membership, with Alma Scott as sponsor.—Lois Hill, Secretary



Cast and stage set for a production of *Uncertain Wings* as given by students of the Beaver High School, Bluefield, West Virginia, with Mary Maston as director.

End of Act III of *You Can't Take It With You* as staged at the Robbinsdale, Minn., Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 352). Bess Sinnott, director.



Springfield, Oregon

SPRINGFIELD Union High School (Thespian Troupe 786): *Best Foot Forward*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Dark Mountain*, *Charley's Aunt*. During the school year forty-three one-act play performances were given. These plays were presented each Friday during the noon hour. Under Thespian sponsorship, the University of Oregon drama group presented *The School for Scandal*. Forty members of the troupe attended six productions at the University of Oregon. A one-act play festival for the county was sponsored. Received two "Excellents" and one "Superior." Fifty-

nine students admitted to Thespian membership during the year. Mrs. Mabel Marie Ellefson, troupe sponsor.—Joy Richey, Secretary

Tulsa, Okla.

CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 817): *Stop Thief*, *Life With Father*, *The Poor Nut*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Late Christopher Bean*, *Red Carnations*, *A Marital Incident*, *The Pot Boiler*, *Christmas Carol*, *Easter pageant*, revue. Radio program, "The Experimental Theatre of the Air," presented every Saturday afternoon over Station KOME.

KVOO Day conducted at which time members take over Station KVOO for one day. Television discussed at meetings of dramatics club. Twenty-one students awarded Thespian membership. Isabelle E. Ronan, troupe sponsor.

Minot, North Dakota

MINOT High School (Thespian Troupe 791): *The Imaginary Invalid*, *Angel Street*, *Lost Horizon*, *Fumed Oak*, *Family Album*, *Hands Across the Sea*, *Storm*, *A Light from St. Agnes*, *Spreading the News*. Current Broadway plays, the art of make-up, and staging a one-act play discussed at meetings. Thespian membership granted to twelve students, with Norman Kirschbaum as sponsor.—Connie Isaacson, Secretary

Niles, Mich.

NILES High School (Thespian Troupe 766): *Saturday Supplement*, *Flattering Word*, *Florist Shop*, *No, a Thousand Times No* (presented at the Drama Clinic, Benton Harbor, as a representative melodrama). Participated in three exchange programs. Joined with the Music Department to produce variety show. Thespian membership granted to twenty-four students with Carl J. Hallenius, troupe sponsor.—Shirley Rose, Secretary

Winder, Georgia

WINDER High School (Thespian Troupe 690): *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, *Love Is Too Much Trouble*, *Curses*, *What a Night!*, *You Can't Skeer Me!*, *Leave It to Joe*, *Dumb Dora*, Christmas pageant. Entry in district and state meets. First place won in district meet, placed fifth in State Meet. A number of members attended Theatre Guild productions of *Showboat* and *Carousel* in Atlanta. Twenty students granted Thespian membership. Colleen Ouzts, troupe sponsor.—Carolyn Brown, Secretary

San Antonio, Texas

SAN ANTONIO Vocational and Technical High School (Thespian Troupe 676): *Love Rides the Rails*, *The More the Merrier*, *Reserve Two for Murder*, *Red Velvet Coat*, *Warrior's Husband*, *Uncle Petey*, *Ghosts a la Mode*, *Sugar and Spice*. Presentation of an original radio program over Station KCAR. Dramatics club meetings given to study of directing, make-up and stagecraft. Thespian membership given to eight students. Mrs. Elaine Curran, troupe sponsor.

Maquoketa, Iowa

MAQUOKETA High School (Thespian Troupe 691): *The Youngest*, *Junior Miss*, *Angela's Surprise*, *Enter the Hero*, Christmas pageant. Entry in the Iowa High School Festival. Thespian membership awarded to seventeen students, with Eleanor Kistle as sponsor.



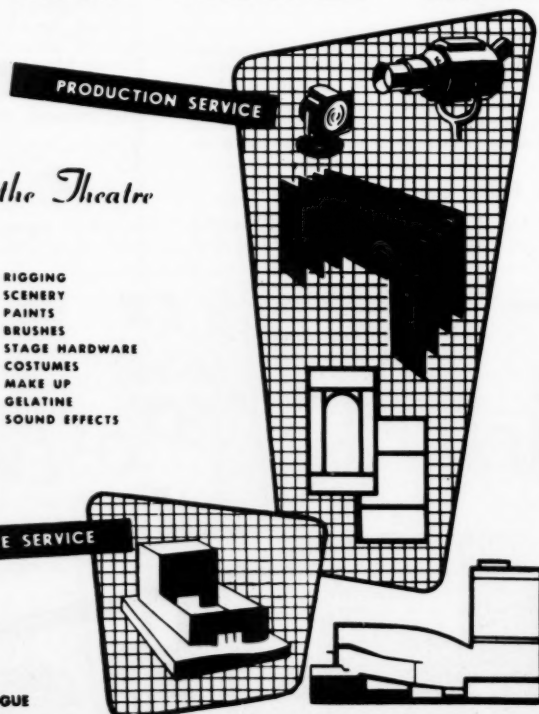
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PLAINVILLE High School Thespian Troupe 627: *My Sister Eileen*, *The Pot Boiler*, *Happy Journey*, *Alexander Proposes*. Dramatics club meetings included study of stage techniques, make-up, etc. Fifteen students awarded Thespian membership, with Mrs. Verna MacMillan as sponsor.—*Judith Lepermine, Secretary*

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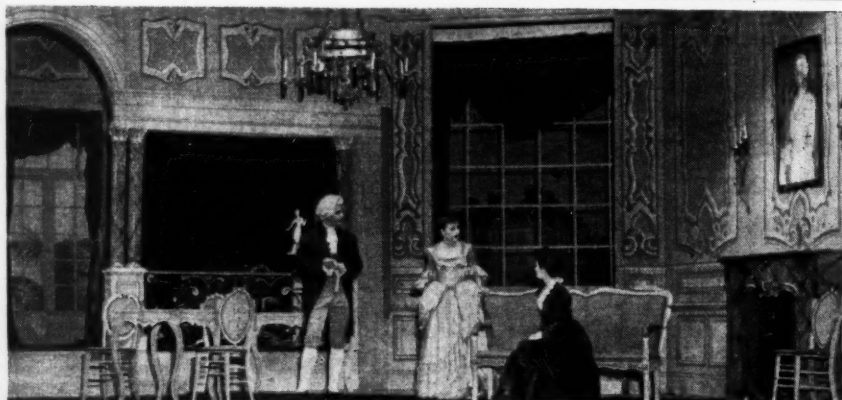
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Hollywood 36, California

Webb City, Mo.

WEBB CITY High School (Thespian Troupe 608): *Brother Goose*, *Nine Girls*, *Spring Fever*. Twenty-one students granted Thespian membership under the direction of Barbara Hedgecock, troupe sponsor.—*Carolyn Jenkins, Secretary*

Bridgeport, Pa.

BRIDGEPORT High School (Thespian Troupe 617): *Junior Prom*, *The Ghost of Benjamin Sweet*, *As Above, Hope of the World*, minstrel show. A play was presented for a P.T.A. meeting during National Education Week. Discussion time at meetings was devoted to pantomimes and monologues with special emphasis on expression through body gestures and motion. Thespian membership awarded to thirty students, with Phyllis K. Blaum as sponsor.—*Mary Picariellis, Secretary*



Scene from the show, *Berkeley Square*, given at the San Diego, California, High School (Thespian Troupe 551). Directed by Lois Perkins.

Spokane, Wash.

NORTH CENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 628): *The Divine Flora*, *Two Crooks and a Lady*, *There's Always Tomorrow*, *Suppressed Desires*, *Question of Figures*, *Ring and the Lock*, *Girls Must Talk*, *Feet First*. Produced two radio programs. Received second place in the Drama Contest of Greater Spokane Music Festival. Six students granted Thespian membership, with Mrs. Lucile E. Hawes as sponsor.—*Sonja Linder, Secretary*

Jacksonville, Fla.

ANDREW JACKSON High School (Thespian Troupe 646): *Doll Daze*, *We Shook the Family Tree*, *The Gold Rush*, *Hillbilly Homecoming*, *Memory Lane*, *Christmas for Wilbur*, *Shoemaker and Elves*, *Christmas pageant*. Entry in the Florida State Festival. Sponsored weekly radio program over Station WJHP. Forty-one students given Thespian membership, with Mrs. Beverly Adams as sponsor.—*Edward White, Secretary*

Fitzgerald, Ga.

FITZGERALD High School (Thespian Troupe 648): *Everything Nice*, *Kitty, Kitty, Grandma Pulls the String*, *A Hero Is Born*, *Christmas Is a Racket*, *Good Will Toward Women*. Entry in district contest received second place. Thespian membership given two students, with Martha Pope as sponsor.—*Sylvia Griner, Secretary*

Grants Pass, Ore.

GRANTS PASS High School (Thespian Troupe 651): *This Is That Night*, *Lie That Jack Built*, *Bread, Salvage Mongers*, *High Window*, *I'll Eat My Hat*, *Make Up and Live*, *Wilbur Takes His Medicine*, *Silver Bracelet*, *Now That April's Here*. Thespian membership granted twelve students, with Fern C. Trull as sponsor.—*Shirley Ball, Secretary*

Elkhart, Indiana

ELKHART Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 653): *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *George Washington Slept Here*, *Smilin' Through*, *Idlings of the King*, *Common Clay*, *Sugar and Spice*, *St. Luke's By-Line*, *Sign of Silver*. Members participated and won honors in district tournament. Sixteen students given Thespian membership. Gladys C. Hughes, troupe sponsor.—*Joan Neu, Secretary*

Blacksburg, Va.

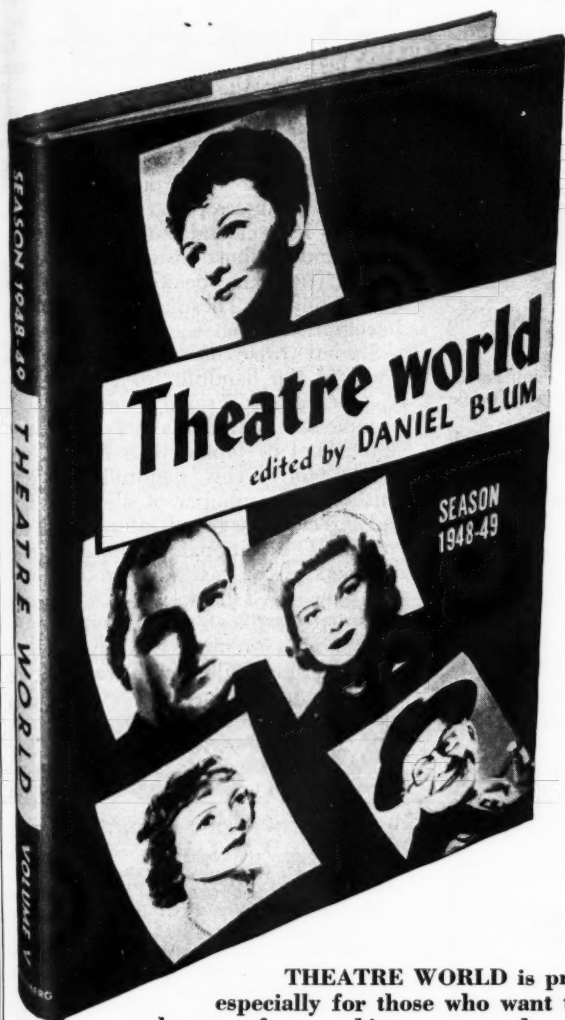
BLACKSBURG DISTRICT High School (Thespian Troupe 633): *Christmas Carol*, *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Make Room for Rodney*. During National Drama Week presented play over Station WPUV. Twenty-nine students awarded Thespian membership, with Mary Helen Caldwell as troupe sponsor.—*Elizabeth Turner, Secretary*

Wayne, Mich.

WAYNE High School (Thespian Troupe 670): *Love Is Too Much Trouble*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *Dress Reversal*, *Be Home By Midnight*, *A Young Man's Fancy*, *High Window*, *Special Guest*, *Among Us Girls*, *Last Flight Over*. Rating of "Excellent" received in Suburban League Festival. Radio program presented over Station WKMH. Dramatics club program included a study of the historical background for drama. A number of students attended *Brigadoon* and *Hamlet*. Thespian membership given sixteen students. Mrs. Letha A. Rice, troupe sponsor.—*Evelyn Berger, Secretary*

Mt. Morris, Mich.

MT. MORRIS High School (Thespian Troupe 673): *We Shook the Family Tree*, *The Late Christopher Bean*, *The Tiger's Necklace*, *Kind Lady*, *Iolanthe*. Seventeen students received Thespian membership, with Betty Campbell as sponsor.—*Ruth Tatrow, Secretary*



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VOLUME V: 1948-1949
edited by DANIEL BLUM

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Pennsylvania Troupes Receive Highest Honors in 1948-49 Handbill Contest

PRINTED HANDBILLS

FIRST place honors in the Printed Program Section of the 1948-49 Handbill Competition sponsored by The National Thespian Society was awarded to the Central Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 660), Johnstown, Pennsylvania, for the handbill used for the production of *Years Ago*, sponsored jointly by the Senior Class of 1949 and Thespians. This handbill is printed in purple and white paper, with a cleverly designed cover page. Besides the usual information found in a theatre handbill, this one contains a calendar of past productions, a synopsis of the play, pictures of members of the cast as they appeared "years ago," and several interesting designs. Edith F. Paul directs dramatics and Thespian activities at this school. (Cash prize of \$5.00 and Thespian Certificate of Recognition.)

Second place honors in the Printed Program Section were captured by Thespians of Troupe No. 745 of the Helena, Montana, High School, with handbills for the productions of *The Hasty Heart* and *Life With Father*. Both of these handbills show much originality in the cover designs with pertinent information concerning the play and the cast in the

body of the programs. Both plays were directed by Doris Marsolais Marshall, Thespian Regional Director for the state of Montana. (Cash prize of \$3.00 and Thespian Certificate of Recognition.)

Honorable Mention in the Printed Program Section was awarded to each of the following handbills (Thespian Certificate of Recognition awarded to each Troupe):

CHRISTMAS WITH CHARLES DICKENS, San Diego, Calif., High School, Thespian Troupe 551, Lois Perkins, sponsor.

FANTASY IN RHYTHM, William Penn Senior High School, York, Pa., Thespian Troupe 520, Leon C. Miller, sponsor.

KLONDIKE GOLD, Bremerton, Wash., High School, Thespian Troupe 897, Edna M. Fraser, sponsor.

REMEMBER THE DAY, Midland, Texas, High School, Thespian Troupe 845, Verna Harris, sponsor.

OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY, Ward High School, Kansas City, Kansas, Thespian Troupe 949, Sister Mary Jovita, sponsor.

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE, Davenport, Iowa, High School, Thespian Troupe 510, Florence E. Clark, sponsor.

DEAR RUTH, Spanish Fork, Utah, High School, Thespian Troupe 25, B. Davis Evans, sponsor.

MIMEOGRAPHED HANDBILLS

In the Mimeographed Section of the annual competition first place was easily

captured by Thespian Troupe 187 of the Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School with their program booklet used for their eighteenth annual banquet. Troupe 187 is under the direction of Jean E. Donahey. The handbill includes the names of various alumni and active members of the Troupe, list of 1949 awards, names of Troupe officers, a long list of interesting facts concerning Troupe 187, calendar of activities for 1949, and a short history of The National Thespian Society. (Cash prize of \$5 and a Thespian Certificate of Recognition.)

Second prize in this division was given to the handbill for a production of *Out of the Frying Pan* staged by Troupe 909 located at the Tokyo American School in Japan, with Frank Jakes as director. This handbill is distinguished by a number of clever designs and three full pages of information concerning The National Thespian Society, members of the cast, and production of the play. (Cash prize of \$3 and a Thespian Certificate of Recognition.)

Honorable Mention was given to the following handbills, with each school receiving a Thespian Certificate of Recognition:

THE DESERT SONG, John Greer High School, Hoopston, Ill., Thespian Troupe 282, Coral Club, Ross Allen, Nelsie Hix, director.

OUR HEARTS WERE YOUNG AND GAY, Highland Park, N. J., High School, Thespian Troupe 805, Gertrude Patterson, sponsor.

"EVENING OF ONE-ACT PLAYS", Muskegon, Mich., Senior High School, Thespian Troupe 704, Helen L. Harton, sponsor.

"NATIONAL DRAMA WEEK", Laramie, Wyo., High School, Thespian Troupe 70, Velma Linford, sponsor.

Entries in the 1948-49 handbill contest numbered 423 printed programs and 245 mimeographed programs. While many of the other handbills were especially interesting in one way or another, some with very attractive cover pages, they were lacking in much of the information that should appear on theatre programs. While some showed some measure of originality in design, the majority of them were of the common variety. Entirely too many of the handbills contained too much blank space that could have been put to good use by the publication of such news items as synopsis of the plot of the play, production notes, calendar of past and coming productions, history of the local Thespian organization, information concerning the author of the play, etc.

All handbills received for the 1948-49 contest will be deposited at a later date with the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library, where all handbills collected by the Thespian Society for the past several years are now deposited.

(Entries are now being accepted for the 1949-50 competition, with the results to be announced next fall. The contest is open only to secondary schools affiliated with The National Thespian Society.)

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What's New Among Books and Plays

The purpose of this department is to keep our readers posted on the latest theatre and drama publications available from publishers. Mention or review of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by Dramatics. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only.

Samuel French
25 West 45th Street

Imagination, a comedy in three acts, by Bruce Abbot. 4 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$15.00. Muriel Henry, determined to have Ronnie Williams, a rich young man, invites him and his domineering mother for a week-end visit. The family very heartily disapprove of the visitors and make no effort to be polite in the way Muriel wishes. To make matters worse, Will Garner comes in to spend the summer and falls in love with Muriel, failing to see Janet, the other daughter of the house, who adores him. Pete, the highly imaginative eleven year old brother and central character, sees all and takes a hand. The action becomes rapid as he ruthlessly plunges into his schemes to drive away the visitors and further Will's affairs. Finally, Janet gets her man and Muriel, her just deserts in the whirlwind climax. The play offers opportunities for younger actors in the conventional and exaggerated characters and simple production of this play.—Myrtle L. Paetznick

Set for a Spell, a comedy in three acts, by Alvin Keir and Peter Carhartt. 4 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$25.00. The plot involves the Fisher Family and the desire of spinster sister Hattie, a ZaZu Pitts' type, to be of help to her brother and his motherless daughters in spite of their efforts to keep her from doing a thing as she "invariably knocked something over." In his effort to get possession of a piece of land, Sam Fisher goes ahead without consulting his would-be partner, Melvin. This so arouses Melvin that he quarrels violently with Sam. The efforts of "Egg" Eggert to help by buying the land for them involves him in a misunderstanding with Gladys Hildebrandt, the town siren, and further antagonizes Arline Fisher, whom he loves. Then Hattie resorts to magic and succeeds in involving every one, but just as everything looks hopeless, Hattie solves the problems. All's well that ends well. The play is light with type characters which would appeal to high school and junior high groups.—Myrtle L. Paetznick

Walter H. Baker Company
178 Tremont Street, Boston, Mass.

There She Goes, a comedy in three acts, by Charles George. 9 w., 3 m. Royalty, \$10.00. Tessie Trask, a stern, man-hating, old maid, has completely dominated her younger brother, Tommy, and has suppressed all his romantic instincts towards Grace Bowers, because they didn't meet with her approval. When it develops that Tessie has been sublimating her own romantic instincts by writing in secret the sensationally torrid best seller, "There She Goes," all their lives are changed for the better. Tommy frees himself from his sister's domination. Tessie becomes rich from the movie rights of her book, goes to Hollywood, and comes back to find romance for herself. Action in this play consists primarily of long, drawn-out quarrel scenes which would rather bore most high school audiences. While the dialogue of the leading characters is natural and they have depth, and their psychology seems logical, the author has tried to combine these realistic characters and situations with some minor stereotyped characters with satirical names.—Katharine Taylor

Knock on Wood, a mystery comedy in three acts, by Glenn Hughes. 5 w., 7 m. Royalty, \$10.00. Calvin Pynn, a famous elderly detective on the verge of retiring, decides to create a test case for his young assistant,

Peter Crossett, before turning over the business to him. With the help of some shady characters, a perplexing problem is created which Peter finally solves with the help of his fiancée, Eleanor, but not until Act III. This mystery comedy is not very mysterious, there is little or no suspense, and the type characters seem shallow, stupid, and colorless, while the dialogue is at time inane.—Katharine Taylor

Row, Peterson & Company
Evanston, Illinois

Fog Island, by E. Clayton McCarty. A suspense play in three acts, for 4 m., 7 w. Good opportunity for characterization in the roles of Mrs. Williams, the forbidding woman of 50, and her stern husband, the mysterious caretakers of the lone island estate, in Doolittle, local blacksmith and sheriff, and in Brock, the suave crook. When five drama students and their instructor are marooned by high tide on Fog Island, they soon sense that Jerry Martin, who pretends not to recognize his old friend, Miss Ralston, is being held a prisoner for some occult reason. The suspense increases as the girls stumble on to more truths. Mr. McCarty has written a good suspense play, with just enough gun play to satisfy the audience but with few, if any, of the amateurish touches that characterize the average suspense play. It is a challenge for good acting. Suitable for ambitious high schools, colleges, or Little Theatres. Royalty, \$1-\$25.—Mary E. Parrish

Glamour Boy, a comedy in three acts, by Esther E. Olson. 7 m., 9 w. One simple set, a principal's office. A clever new comedy in the Henry Aldrich style, that concerns the struggles of Peewee Mooney, the school underdog, who in an easily-staged dream sequence saves the school charmer from drowning, gets a swimming pool for his school, and supplants the school idol and athlete in the girl's affection. In the third-act awakening Peewee finds at least part of his dreams coming true. Royalty, \$1-\$25, according to the Row-Peterson Percentage Plan.—Mary E. Parrish

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.
14 East 38th St., New York City

The Young and Fair, a play in three acts, by N. Richard Nash. 21 females. Royalty, \$50 to \$25. The setting for this extremely interesting and worth while play is a fashionable junior college for young women. The story centers largely around the efforts of a young teacher to adhere to her standards of right and wrong in the face of terrific pressure from one of the students, daughter of one of the trustees, who is a liar and a cheat, and from the compromising attitudes of the school director who wants to do the right thing but lacks the courage to translate her beliefs into action. The play has strong audience appeal. The fact that it has a large all-girl cast makes it especially suitable as a class play. All-female drama groups will find this play an excellent choice. It is definitely not too difficult for experienced high school casts.—Ernest Bavely

Two Blind Mice, a comedy in three acts, by Samuel Spewak. 14 m., 4 w. Royalty quoted upon application. (Released in some territory during the 1949-50 season for non-professional production.) As described by the publisher, this "farical play is not only an entertaining theatrical show, but is full of caustic and amusing satire on bureaucracy, stupidity and red tape." The story concerns two old ladies

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"We have had only enthusiastic comments. The audience was either laughing or sitting on the edge of their seats all evening." . . . M.H.C., Auburn, Mass.

"The play, 'THE OVERNIGHT GHOST' was a big success, and the hall was filled to capacity. We should say that this type of play goes over BIG!" . . . E.L.K. Rockport, Mass.

Light but blithsome was 'THE OVERNIGHT GHOST,' a comedy in three acts and four scenes . . . There was a farical mood which obviously pleased the audience and laughs were spontaneous." . . . George Currie, Brooklyn Eagle.

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who for years have been operating "The Office of Seeds and Standards" for the U.S. Government, although the agency was abolished many years ago. Tommy Thurston, a newspaper man, discovers this rather unusual situation and proceeds to exploit it for all the fun he can get out of it, much to the sorrow of government officials and representatives of the Army and Navy. This is an ideal play for college and Little Theatre groups, although advance high school drama groups should not find it too difficult to stage.—*Ernest Bavely*

National Theatre Conference
Eldred Hall, Western Reserve University,
Cleveland, Ohio

A Guide to Theatre Reading, by Roy Stallings and Paul Myers. As indicated in the preface by the authors, this is a selected bibliography of works which have appeared since 1932. The book is divided into thirteen parts which list works under the following headings: Theatre Practice, Biography, English Historical Theatre, American Historical Theatre, Continental Historical Theatre, Oriental Historical Theatre, Historical Theatre (Survey), Drama As Literature, Dramatic Criticism, Production, Acting, Educational Theatre, and Aesthetics of Theatre. Interesting explanatory notes concerning each of the works adds much to the value of the book. All who are seriously interested in world theatre will find this publication extremely helpful. — *Ernest Bavely*

Winchester Publications Limited
16 Maddox St., London, W. 1, England

The British Film Annual, 1949. Price 10s. 6d. net. This artistically-designed publication contains a record of fifty-four British films generally released in 1948. Each film account is illustrated with action pictures and portraits of stars and leading players. The book contains fifteen full-page color plates of British stars. All who love photoplays will find in this book much that will please them. For Americans especially, the book will serve as an excellent introduction to many British film stars and directors comparatively unknown here. The book also serves as a guide to the better British films. This writer wishes that producers here would issue an annual of this nature covering recent outstanding American films. *The British Film Annual* makes extremely good reading.—*Ernest Bavely*

Educators Progress Service
Randolph, Wis.

Educators Guide to Free Films, ninth annual edition. Price, \$5.00. This edition of this well-known film guide lists 1716 titles, 511 of which were not listed in the previous edition. This publication is easily one of the most helpful sources of information for all who are interested in the use of free films. The book is well indexed for ease in locating films on a wide variety of subjects. Schools and other groups which make extensive use of films will find the purchase of this guide an investment that pays many dividends during the course of a year.—*Ernest Bavely*

Charles Scribner's Sons
597 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

Immortal Shadows, a book of dramatic criticism, by Stark Young. 1948. Price, \$3.00. This book brings together sixty-five dramatic criticisms by Mr. Young, covering memorable theatre productions and events, actors, dramatists, theatre practices, and the author's reaction to a long list of outstanding plays. The selection of reviews is especially noteworthy. Especially outstanding are Mr. Young's account of "The Moscow Art Theatre," "Mei Lan-Fang," "The Green Pastures," and "The Iceman Cometh." Besides the wealth of information and observations found on theatre matters, this book is distinguished for its fine writing. This is a book this

reviewer is proud to own. It belongs in every library.—*Ernest Bavely*

T. S. Denison & Company
Chicago and Minneapolis

Little Miss Spitfire, a comedy, by James F. Stone. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Visiting heiress enchants social climber who is looking for wealthy matrimonial prospects for her children. In this way she hopes to bolster up the failing family fortunes. Light, amusing, easy to produce. A comedy of errors in which all ends well. Humor in characters, speech and action rather than situations.

Great Day, a farce in three acts, by Leland Price. 5 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Type names reveal characteristics of the characters. Contains many puns. Easy to produce. Would appeal to any cast wishing a typical farce filled with laughable situations and strongly pointed up humor.

My Darling Children, Jean Provence, 4 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$15.00. The action centers around a mother who tries to make herself seem younger by making her grown-up children dress as children. Complications grow out of this until she is glad to have them assume their true ages. This is a rather cute play with spirited dialogue and lively action. Somewhat different from the usual comedy with a domestic theme.—*Helen Movius*

Plays, Inc.

8 Arlington Street, Boston 16, Mass.

Career Plays for Young People, by Samuel S. Richmond, 1949. \$3.50. In this group of thirty non-royalty one-act plays, dramatizing twenty-seven occupational and three general career situations, the author's plan is to point up pertinent information for the purpose of helping young people understand the requirements and possibilities of certain careers. Production is simplified by production notes at the end of each chapter, while casting is rendered easy by the natural and interesting characters and situations into which teen-agers may project themselves. Casts range from four to eleven characters with boys predominating according to occupation. These plays are well suited to junior and senior high school use and directive club programs.—*June Lingo*

Oxford University Press

114 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

Shakespearean Comedy, by Thomas Marc Parrott, retired professor of English at Princeton and Vanderbilt Universities, and editor of a number of books on Shakespeare. Price, \$6.50. A scholarly study of the background of comedy and Shakespeare's mastery of it. Mr. Parrott discusses some three dozen plays, from *The Comedy of Errors* to *The Tempest* in such a masterful way that his book will be interesting as well as profitable to all students of Shakespeare, particularly in colleges and universities. Of use to teachers only in high schools.—*Mary Parrish*

The Dramatic Publishing Company

1706 South Prairie Avenue, Chicago 16, Ill.

Mother Is a Freshman, a comedy in three acts, dramatized by Perry Clark from the story of Raphael David Blau. 6 men, 9 women. Royalty, \$25.00. This is a play based upon an extremely interesting idea — the story of a young widowed mother who enrolls as a freshman in the college where her daughter is a sophomore. The daughter's fear that she is being disgraced is not lessened by the fact that the zoology professor finds mother interesting in a romantic way. The play affords good entertainment, although this reviewer feels the story as drama has many more possibilities than Mr. Clark has given it. This comedy is rather easy to present. High school and other drama groups should find *Mother Is a Freshman* a happy choice for their production calendar, especially if the director is one who can present the play with

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Change of address should be promptly reported to us as the post office does not forward second-class matter. The old address, as well as the new, should be reported.

a generous measure of imagination.—*Ernest Bavely*

Seventeenth Summer, a play in three acts, dramatized by Anne Coulter Martens from the book by Maureen Daly. 6 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$25.00. This reviewer rates this play in a class by itself when compared with the average run of so-called "teen-age" plays. Miss Martens has done an exceptionally fine piece of work with the dramatization. The characters are quite real, the situations natural, and the plot genuine. The story is largely centered around seventeen-year-old Angie who goes through her first romantic experience. That this experience has its painful side for Angie is made clear as the play progresses. The ending of the play is especially well handled by Miss Martens. This play should make an ideal choice for high school drama groups. It is definitely above average in its dramatic power to hold an audience.—*Ernest Bavely*

The Northwestern Press

2200 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn.

Young Lady, a comedy in three acts, by Jon Shelton. 4 m., 13 w. Royalty, \$25.00. A girl of fifteen, with some help from a family friend who is also a psychiatrist, solves all the family problems satisfactorily for everyone. A rather typical domestic comedy in which an adolescent plays a leading role.—*Helen Movius*

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946.

Of Dramatics magazine, published monthly (8 times) at Cincinnati, Ohio, for October, 1949, State of Ohio, County of Hamilton.

Before me, a notary public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Ernest Bavely, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of Dramatics, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc. of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations).

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publishers, The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; Editor, Ernest Bavely, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; Managing editor, none; Business manager, Ernest Bavely, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio.

2. That the owner is: The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio; National Director, Barbara Wellington, B.M.C. Durfee High School, Fall River, Mass.; Assistant National Director, Blandford Jennings, Clayton, Mo.; High School; Secretary and Treasurer, Ernest Bavely, Cincinnati, Ohio; Senior Councilors, Marian Stuart, Champaign, Ill., Jean E. Donahay, Brownsville, Pa.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amounts of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owner, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock, and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Ernest Bavely, Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 9th day of September, 1949. (Seal) Frank M. Malrose (My commission expires July 11, 1952).

HANGMAN'S NOOSE

By George Batson

Mystery, Three Acts

4 males, 6 females. Interior. Modern Costumes.

Books, 85c. Royalty, \$25.00

The surviving members of a strange and shallow family gather on a cold and damp March night in the house of the late Caroline Keating, a successful mystery novelist. The novelist had given her remote country house the ominous name of "Hangman's Noose," the title of her most famous mystery novel. The family has been summoned here this evening for the reading of her will. Gareth, her favorite nephew, is not among those present. He had disappeared a year ago, following a murder and a scandal. He had had no part in the murder of Uncle Martin, but he could not prove it. Gareth was in love with Cousin Polly. The lawyer and housekeeper, Keep and Martha, gather the family together. Then a terrifying sequence of events begins to take

place. Cousin Ella is frightened by a prowler in the driveway; Polly sees a face at the window; strange noises are heard about the house. The lights go out, and the housekeeper Martha is murdered. The lawyer is the next victim of the unknown assassin. Polly discovers that slick cousin Henry is the murderer. In a scene of mounting terror, Henry stalks Polly as his next victim. But novelist Caroline suddenly appears from the tomb armed with a gun. She is not dead after all but very much alive. Having been possessed with a fear of being buried alive, she had her tomb equipped with an automatic siren and release. Henry kills himself. Gareth, whom Caroline had protected in her house, is reunited with Polly.

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Three young actresses, Timmie, Sheila and Pat, share a basement apartment in Mrs. Mappan's house in the East 50's. Talent, and a burning desire to act hasn't brought them a job. Sunday morning finds them minus their rent. A certain European producer, Mr. Cherenki, said to be living in the fashionable East 50's, is casting a play. How to get in touch with him is their problem. Then Timmie gets an idea: why not open a restaurant in their own apartment? Mr. Cherenki and all the other notables who live in the locality will be sure to come in. Soon, says Timmie, we shall all be playing parts on Broadway. Sheila, Pat and

Pete, the boy-friend, are skeptical. They are not sure that Mrs. Mappan will agree to the plan. But Timmie is persuasive, and in the Second Act the restaurant is in full swing. Eleanor, a charming vague cashier-hostess; Mrs. Mappan, who tells fortunes; Magnolia, the comic maid; a bearded gentleman mistaken for Mr. Cherenki; and series of mishaps create laugh after laugh. The arrival of Mr. Cherenki himself in the Third Act merely adds to the complication. Only after every possible thing has gone wrong does Timmie's idea begin to work.



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